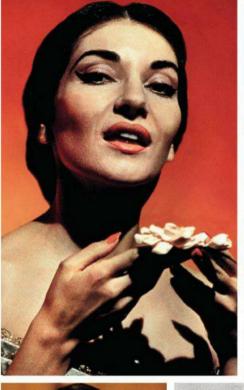
Lang Lang on Barenboim · Alsop on Bernstein · Pappano on Domingo

THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

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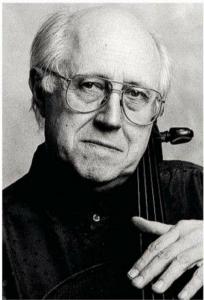


















Tine Thing Helseth Storyteller



Trumpeter Tine Thing Helseth tells stories of love and loss on her solo debut CD. She performs a programme of songs by Grieg, Strauss, Sibelius, Ravel, Canteloube and Weill, among others, transcribed for trumpet with either piano or orchestral accompaniment. Tine's musical collaborators are pianist Håvard Gimse and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eivind Aadland.

Tour Dates:

15th April - Nottingham, Albert Hall

16th April - Birmingham, Town Hall

18th April - London, Limelight

19th April - Classic FM Live, Royal Albert Hall

Other titles to look out for



Glorious Majesty

Glorious Majesty – Music for English Kings and Queens is a 3CD collection of classical music written for English Kings and Queens through the ages, From Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II (via Queen Mary II, Queen Anne, George II, Edward VI, and George V) the collection includes the much-loved classics including Handel's Zadok the Priest, Parry's I was glad, and Elgar's arrangement of the National Anthem.



Kathleen Ferrier

Described as a 'legend in her own lifetime', Kathleen Ferrier rose from obscurity to become one of the most sought-after contraltos of the 20th century. In this 3-disc set, released to celebrate the centenary of her birth, we are treated for the first time to her complete EMI recordings; from her signature role of Orfeo to previously unreleased takes of the acclaimed 1949 Kindertotenlieder with Bruno Walter, this collection is a fitting tribute to a great British singer whose expressive voice continues to captivate listeners today.



Joyce Di Donato

Joyce DiDonato revives her acclaimed role as the nun Sister Helen Prejean in Jake Heggie's powerful Dead Man Walking, Inspired by her real-life memoirs, the opera focuses on Sister Helen's time acting as counsellor to a prisoner on death row in Louisiana. The performance is directed by Patrick Summers and stars baritone Philip Cutlip as the convicted Joseph De Rocher, soprano Measha Brueggergosman as Sister Rose and mezzo soprano Frederica von Stade playing Mrs De Rocher, in her farewell performance ending a celebrated 41-year operatic career.



tenThing

EMI's exciting new signing. Tine Thing Helseth, leads the all-female Norwegian Brass Ensemble, ten Thing, in this unique and high-quality recording which promises to change the way people think about and experience brass ensembles. They play Grieg, Piazzolla and Mozart favourites, cleverly arranged (by Jarle Storfokken), as well as original compositions for Brass Dectet by the likes of Dutch composer, Jan Koetsier.

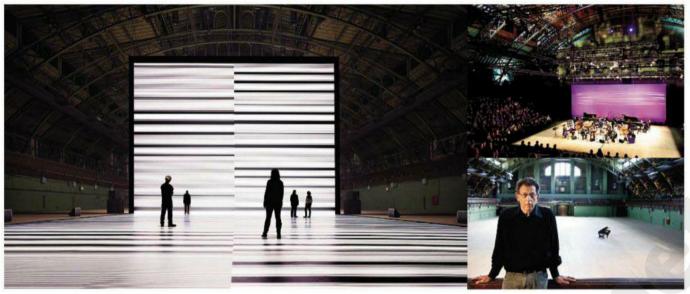


Sounds of America

Gramophone's guide to the classical scene in the US and Canada

+

Focus Park Avenue Armory - page I » The Scene Musical highlights - page IV » Recording reviews - page IX



Drill Hall 2011, clockwise from left: the transfinite by Ryoji Ikeda; the powerLESS, Tune-In Music Festival; this year's featured artist and festival co-curator Philip Glass

VENUE FOR THE 21st CENTURY

An Upper East Side military hall completed in 1881 is fast becoming one of New York's most important cultural venues, finds **Vivien Schweitzer**

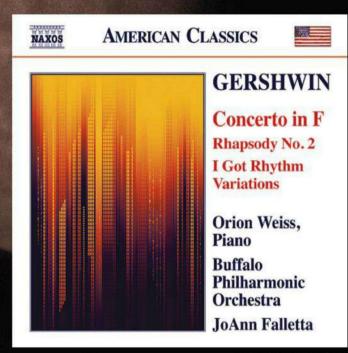
ome of the most exciting musical events in New York in recent years have taken place in the vast Drill Hall of Park Avenue Armory, which, since it first staged a production as an arts venue in September 2007, is fast becoming one of the city's most important 21st-century cultural institutions. In February 2011, the audience sat in pitch darkness for much of Georg Friedrich Haas's In Vain – a stunning spectral work of shimmering soundscapes. The audience seating for Die Soldaten, a modernist opera by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, rolled back and forth on railway tracks, literally drawing the audience into the action.

The Armory's huge space, the length of a football field with an 80-foot-high ceiling and cathedral-like acoustics, will be put to good use again on June 29 and 30 when the New York Philharmonic perform Stockhausen's *Gruppen*, a massive and rarely performed work scored for three orchestras. The ensembles will surround the audience in the form of a horseshoe. Music director Alan Gilbert will share conducting duties with Magnus Lindberg and Matthias Pintscher.

The concert, like many musical events at the Armory, features an eclectic line-up: the programme also includes Pierre Boulez's *Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna*, the Act 1 finale from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and Ives's *The Unanswered Question*. Another intriguing musical event, the US premiere of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's *The Murder of Crows*, runs from August 3 to September 9. Billed as a three-part, 30-minute composition that 'animates the Armory's cavernous Drill Hall with a dreamlike soundscape that weaves together a fluttering of voices, music, and sounds', the work features 98 speakers mounted on stands, chairs and walls throughout the hall. Unconventional and exciting programming



... one of the finest conductors of her generation" -The New York Times



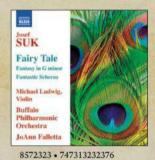
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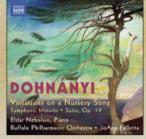
"...one of the more thoughtful and beautiful versions of the work to come out in recent years."

-Classics Today

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'The work should fit hand in glove with the space, and should resonate rather than fight with it' - Alex Poots



will surely continue to flourish at the Armory when Alex Poots, director of the Manchester International Festival in the UK, takes over as artistic director in 2013 and commissions new works that utilise the non-traditional setting.

Some works will be collaborative projects with the Manchester festival, which in recent years has featured a residency by Björk, original productions by performance artist Marina Abramović and theatre company Punchdrunk, a new opera by Blur's Damon Albarn, and Rufus Wainwright's opera *Prima Donna*.

Planning for the 2013 Armory season is in its infancy, but Poots, who has also served as director of contemporary arts at English National Opera, said his experience at Manchester would inform his programming philosophy stateside. 'The Armory has a very specific DNA,' he tells *Gramophone*. 'Everything we do should be a commission, so the work fits hand in glove with the space and resonates rather than fights with the space. It's a place for artists to make work they couldn't make anywhere else.

'I want a wide range of art forms in the building,' he adds. 'There are some artists who are increasingly interested in what I call the space between art forms. For example, with someone like Matthew Barney – is it visual arts or performance? The piece he did for us in Manchester had visual and performance and film. I could imagine such an artist finding the Armory environment really rewarding.

'The job of an artistic director is to choose the right artist and to help and support them,' continues Poot. 'The day that I go beyond that is when things become problematic. I like my artists to lead me into their world, not the other way round. So I start with them. The mantra is that less is more; I want to do a few things really, really well.'

Rebecca Robertson became president and executive producer of the Armory in 2006 after leading the construction launch of the \$700m Lincoln Center redevelopment, and, between 1987 and 1997, the \$1.8bn transformation of a then-rundown stretch of 42nd Street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue. Echoing Poots's comments, she tells *Gramophone* that in New York there has always been 'a fascination with site-specific work. I used to be involved in an arts organisation that did things in old broken-down theatres in Harlem and under train tracks and in the meat market when it was still a meat market. Site-specific work presses the art form in a different direction and there is something freeing about that. The Armory provides a space where artists can work in that way.'

One of the most pleasant surprises, says Robertson, was discovering how well music worked in the Armory, an Upper East Side building that was built in 1881 for the Seventh Regiment of the National Guard, to be used for military practices. It was also a place for public events and a social club, as the beautifully decorated period rooms attest. The Armory opened with a large-scale concert in 1881; a performance of Stravinsky's 'Sacred Masterpieces' in 2008 inaugurated the Drill Hall as a 21st-century concert space. Other noteworthy musical offerings

(some of them co-productions with other major institutions) since the Armory's 2007 launch as an arts venue include a celebration of Philip Glass this past spring; the New York premiere of John Luther Adams's percussion epic *Inuksuit*; and a conducting seminar with Kurt Masur that culminated in an all-Mendelssohn concert conducted by Masur and his protégés. Artists-in-residence have included the soprano Lauren Flanigan and the string quartet Ethel.

The Armory's first event as an arts venue, in 2007, was Aaron Young's 9216-square-foot 'action painting' called *Greeting Card*, which featured 12 choreographed motorcyclists riding their bikes over a 72ft-by-128ft surface of painted plywood to create a new piece of art. Other offerings have included five plays presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company in a full-scale Shakespearean theatre constructed inside the Drill Hall; a video-and-sound commission by Japanese sound artist Ryoji Ikeda; and a site-specific work by Shen Wei Dance Arts.

'I do think there is an essential democracy to the Amory,' explains Robertson. 'The things that are successful here have a sense of being communal – there's a slight hippy sensibility.' Both Robertson and Poots hope to attract a crossover audience to Armory events, something that Robertson believes is already happening.

The fact that membership to the Armory has grown hugely seems to indicate that there's 'a core of people who saw something terrific here, maybe an art piece. Then they came to a music event because they loved the space,' she explains. Future commissions will be undertaken in collaboration with international organisations that also have unusual spaces, including Manchester and the Ruhrtriennale.

The Armory, for decades used for hosting travelling antique shows, is currently undergoing a \$200m renovation by Herzog & de Meuron. The venue was named one of the hundred most endangered historic sites by the World Monuments Fund in 2000, along with the likes of Machu Picchu. To date, about \$84m has been spent on refurbishments, which include infrastructure improvements in the 55,000-square-foot hall, which will retain its industrial ambiance. More delicate restorations are being undertaken in the exquisitely decorated period rooms, some designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany, Stanford White and the Herter brothers. The smaller rooms will continue to be used for site-specific art projects, along with the main hall. The five-storey building will also feature new studios and rehearsal rooms.

While artistic funds are currently far lower than the renovation budget, by 2013 the Armory intends to increase its budget for artistic productions to \$5m. That's certainly peanuts when compared to the programming budgets of many major institutions.

But, as Robertson points out, the Armory 'is a small organisation with very big ambitions and a very big hall'. The space is certainly large enough to accommodate those ambitions, and the Armory will undoubtedly continue to cement its position as a valuable part of New York's cultural life. •

NOT-TO-BE-MISSED ARMORY CONCERTS

Stockhausen's Gruppen June 29 and 30, 8pm

Two performances of Stockhausen's work for three orchestras. Alan Gilbert, Magnus Lindberg and Matthias Pintscher conduct the New York Philharmonic in a programme that also includes works by Mozart, Boulez and Ives.

The Murder of Crows August 3 - September 9: Tue-Sun 12-7pm; Thu 12-9pm; Mondays closed except September 3, 12-7pm

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's installation is a dreamlike soundscape using 98 speakers mounted around the Drill Hall.

armoryonpark.org

THE SCENE

Amid myriad operas – from Telemann's Orpheus in New York to Glass's Kepler in Charleston – there's Voigt in Montreal, a tuba concerto in Chicago and a Magnus Lindberg world premiere



Billy Budd was last seen at the Met in 1997, with Claggart sung by James Morris - as in this season's revival

NEW YORK

The Metropolitan Opera

The Makropulos Case (April 27, May 1, 5, 8 & 11) Billy Budd (May 4, 10 & 12)

Karita Mattila and Nathan Gunn bring two relative rarities for US audiences to the Met stage. The former sings Janáček's Faustian femme fatale in The Makropulos Case, headlining a production that infamously featured the accidental on-stage death of tenor Richard Versalle at its opening in 1996. She stars opposite Kurt Streit, Johan Reuter and Tom Fox under conductor Jirí Bělohlávek. Elijah Moshinsky, who originally created this production, personally returns to direct the revival. Meanwhile, Nathan Gunn stars in Britten's seafaring opera, not seen at the Met since 1997, opposite James Morris as his adversary Claggart and John Daszak as Captain Vere. David Robertson conducts.

metoperafamily.org

WASHINGTON DC Washington National Opera

Nabucco (April 28, May 2, 5, 10, 13, 15, 18 & 21)

Verdi's Babylonian epic is seen at the Washington National Opera for the first time, in firebrand director Thaddeus Strassberger's new production – a co-production with Minnesota Opera and Opera Company of Philadelphia, where it will also be seen in future seasons. WNO's music director Philippe Auguin leads a cast that stars Franco Vassallo as Nabucco and Csilla Boross as Abigaille. Also featured are Burak Bilgili as Zaccaria, Sean Panikkar as Ismaele and Géraldine Chauvet as Fenena.

kennedy-center.org

NEW YORK Lincoln Center

Freiburg Baroque Orchestra (May 1)

The 2011 *Gramophone* Award laureates for the best Baroque Instrumental performance (heard on a recording of CPE Bach concertos for Harmonia Mundi) visit New York for a performance of JS Bach. Violinist and director Gottfried von der Goltz leads Freiburg's period-instrument specialists in the complete orchestral suites, Nos 1-4, as part of the season's final instalment of Lincoln Center's Great Performers series. The performance takes place at Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater.

lcgreatperformers.org

NEW YORK

New York Philharmonic

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No 4; Lindberg: Piano Concerto No 2 (May 3-5) Carmina Burana (May 31-June 2)

Conductor Alan Gilbert furthers the orchestra's relationship with former composer-in-residence Magnus Lindberg with the world premiere of the composer's Piano Concerto No 2, a New York Philharmonic commission, played by soloist Yefim Bronfman. Preceding it is Dvořák's overture Carnival and following it is Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 4. At the end of the month, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos wraps up a whirlwind tour of North America by leading the same orchestra in Orff's Carmina Burana with soprano Erin Morley. tenor Nicholas Phan and baritone Jacques Imbrailo. In place of the usual New York-based choirs, the main chorus is supplied by Orfeón Pamplonés from Spain, who are joined by the Brooklyn Youth Chorus. Frühbeck also conducts selections from Falla's scenic cantata Atlàntida. nyphil.org

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Philharmonic

Rattle conducts Bruckner (May 3-6) Mozart/Da Ponte Trilogy: Don Giovanni (May 18, 20, 24 & 26)

Mezzo Magdalena Kožená appears with her husband, Sir Simon Rattle, to sing Mahler's Rückert-Lieder. The concert also features Ligeti's Atmosphères, the Prelude to Act 1 of Wagner's Lohengrin and Bruckner's Symphony No 9. Later in the month, music director Gustavo Dudamel gives LA Opera a run for its money with a staged Don Giovanni directed by Christopher Alden and starring Mariusz Kwiecien in the title-role. Kevin Burdette is his manservant Leporello. In the three female roles are Carmela Remigio as Donna Anna, Aga Mikolaj as Donna Elvira and Anna Prohaska as Zerlina. Pavol Breslik sings Don Ottavio, Ryan Kuster is Masetto and Stefan Kocan plays the Commendatore.

laphil.com

SEATTLE

Seattle Opera

Madama Butterfly (May 5, 9, 11-13, 16, 19 & 20)

Described as the next Scotto by no less than Renata herself, Patricia Racette makes her Seattle Opera debut in her signature role of

JTOGRAPHY: WINNIE KLOTZ/METROPOLITAN OPERA, ROBERT MILLARD

Cio-Cio-San; soprano Ausrine Stundyte fills in on May 11, 13 and 20. Similarly, Stefano Secco, fresh from appearing in Los Angeles opposite Plácido Domingo in *Simon Boccanegra*, and young artist Nathaniel Peake share the role of Pinkerton; they also appear in Seattle for the first time, along with fellow newcomer conductor Julian Kovatchev. Jennifer Hines sings Suzuki and Brett Polegato performs as Sharpless in Peter Kazaras's production.

seattleopera.org

NEW YORK

Carnegie Hall

Spring for Music (May 7-12)

In the course of one week, six orchestras and their music directors come to Carnegie Hall for a series of concerts in which all tickets are \$25. Houston Symphony starts the cycle with Hans Graf conducting an all-Shostakovich programme of Antiformalist Rayok (with bass Mikhail Svetlov) and Symphony No 11 (The Year 1905). William Eddins and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra go next with three US premieres: a new work by Robert Rival, John Estacio's Triple Concerto and Allan Gilliland's Dreaming of the Masters III, plus Martinů's Symphony No 1. Jacques Lacombe and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra cross the Hudson river to perform Varèse's Nocturnal featuring soprano Hila Plitmann and the men of the Westminster Symphonic Choir, plus Weill's Symphony No 1 and Busoni's Piano Concerto with Marc-André Hamelin. After that is the Alabama Symphony Orchestra under Justin Brown with two New York premieres - Avner Dorman's Astrolatry and Paul Lansky's Shapeshifters for two pianos and orchestra and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Edo de Waart perform Messiaen's Les offrandes oubliées, Debussy's La mer and Chen Qigang's Iris dévoilée. Finally, the Nashville Symphony and Giancarlo Guerrero end the festival with Larry Austin's completion of Charles Ives's Universe Symphony, Percy Grainger's The Warriors and Terry Riley's The Palmian Chord Rvddle for electric violin and orchestra.

springformusic.com

TORONTO

Canadian Opera Company

Handel: Semele (May 9, 11, 13, 16, 19, 22, 24 & 26)
A production of Handel's oratorio-cum-opera

courtesy of Brussels's La Monnaie features Nova Scotia-born soprano Jane Archibald in the title-role. Allyson McHardy plays her rival as Juno/Ino, while American tenor William Burden bridges their divide as Jupiter. Katherine Whyte sings Iris. Concerto Italiano founder Rinaldo Alessandrini leads from the pit. Performance artist Zhang Huan helms the action on stage, drawing parallels between Ovid's tale and the Buddhist concepts of *yin* and *guo*, or cause and effect. The Chinese cultural thread continues with the set: a 450-year-old temple imported from a small town a few hours away from Shanghai.

coc.ca

NEW YORK

New York City Opera

Telemann: Orpheus (May 12, 15, 17 & 20)

A crucial comeback season for City Opera closes with Telemann's Orpheus. rediscovered late last century and featuring a trilingual libretto. Noted Shakespearean Rebecca Taichman directs a production conducted by Gary Thor Wedow. Daniel Teadt and Joélle Harvey sing Orpheus and Eurydice, set against the villainess Orasia performed by Jennifer Rowley. Michelle Areyzaga, Meredith Lustig, Daryl Freedman, Victor Ryan Robertson, Kelly Markgraf and David Salsbery Fry comprise the extensive cast in the respective roles of Ismene, Cephisa, Ascalax, Eurimedes, Pluto and Bass. As part of the company's commitment to touring theatres all over New York City, the performance takes place in the boutique auditorium of El Museo del Barrio.

nycopera.com

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Opera

La bohème (May 12, 20, 23, 26 & 31, June 2)

Another husband-and-wife duo dock in Los Angeles this month (see LA Phil, page IV). Stephen Costello and Ailyn Pérez are an American-born soprano and tenor (she from Chicago, he from Philadelphia) who have both ascended to the upper echelons of the opera scene. Costello makes his LA Opera debut as the Rodolfo to Pérez's Mimì, with Artur Ruciński as Marcello and Janai Brugger sharing duties with Valentina Fleer as Musetta. Maestro Patrick Summers temporarily

trades in his usual post at San Francisco to make his LA Opera debut in the pit.

laopera.com

FORT WORTH Fort Worth Opera

Tosca (May 12, 20 & 25, June 2)

Three Decembers (May 13, 18, 20, 26 & 31, June 2) The Marriage of Figaro (May 19 & 27, June 1) Lysistrata (May 26 & June 3)

Fort Worth Opera's season features two standards and two feisty newcomers performed over the course of three weeks. Carter Scott, Roger Honeywell and Michael Chioldi sing the three primary roles of *Tosca* under the baton of Joe Illick and the direction of Daniel Pelzig, Illick also conducts a rare vet vital production of Marc Adamo's antiwar Lysistrata, starring Fort Worth Opera regular Ava Pine as Lysia with Scott Scully as Nico and Ashley Kerr as Myrrhine. David Gately directs. In The Marriage of Figaro. Donovan Singletary and Andrea Carroll as Figaro and Susanna face off against Jonathan Beyer and Jan Cornelius as the Count and Countess Almaviva, with Wallis Giunta as Cherubino. Eric Einhorn directs and Stewart Robertson conducts. Finally, Jake Heggie's Three Decembers - a familial reckoning based on a play by operaphile Terrence McNally - features Emily Pulley singing the part of a famous actress. Janice Hall and Matthew Worth play her estranged children. Conductor Christopher Larkin partners with director Candace Evans.

fwopera.org



LA Opera is staging a revival of Puccini's La bohème

Spoleto Festival regulars the Westminster Choir return for a performance of Howells's Requiem



CHICAGO

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Beethoven: Symphony No 7 (May 15 & 17)

The tuba is the unlikely soloist in these concerts, with CSO brass ringleader Gene Pokorny playing the meat of Ralph Vaughan Williams's Concerto in F minor. Despite the minor key, it's actually a very wide-ranging and enlivened work worthy of every performance it can get. Dallas Symphony Orchestra maestro Jaap van Zweden also conducts the orchestra in Haydn's *Oxford* Symphony (No 92) and Beethoven's Symphony No 7.

cso.org

TORONTO

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Kissin plays Grieg (May 17 & 19) Brahms & Shostakovich (May 24 & 26)

Noted interpreter of the Romantic repertoire Yevgeny Kissin performs Grieg's Piano Concerto under Andrew Davis. The programme is complemented by Nielsen's Overture to *Maskarade* and two works by Richard Strauss: *Don Juan* and the Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*. The following week, recent MacArthur 'Genius' Fellow Alisa Weilerstein continues her tour of Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No 1, playing it here under Thomas Dausgaard. Paired with that is Brahms's Symphony No 2.

tso.ca

KANSAS CITY Kansas City Symphony

Bach, Mendelssohn & Haydn (May 18-20)

Bernard Labadie conducts JC Bach's Symphony in G minor and Haydn's *Clock* Symphony. A rare treat will be the Symphony in F major of 'Swedish Mozart' Joseph Martin Kraus. In contrast with Mozart, however, many of Kraus's symphonies are lost or attributed to another composer, and this is one of only a dozen (one of which is dedicated to Haydn) that remain. Brazilian-born pianist Arnaldo Cohen plays Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No 1.

kcsymphony.org

MONTREAL

Montreal Opera Gounod: Faust (May 19, 22, 24 & 26)

Father-and-son tenor team Guy and Antoine Bélanger are Faust the elder and the younger in this take on Gounod's opera. Soprano Mary



Dunleavy presumably pairs with the younger as Marguerite, while bass Alexander Vinogradov rounds out the devil's love triangle as Méphistophélès. Baritone and Montreal Opera regular Etienne Dupuis sings Valentin, and young mezzo Emma Parkinson is the boyish Siébel. Emmanuel Plasson conducts a new production directed by Alain Gauthier. operademontreal.com

MONTREAL

Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal

Deborah Voigt (May 22 & 23)

The vast majority of the OSM's May concerts are already sold out, all of them conducted by Kent Nagano, including a centennial celebration of the premiere of Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire featuring soloists from the Bavarian State Orchestra (May 7), a daring partnership with Cirque Éloize for Ravel's Daphnis et Chloé to fete the ballet's own 100th birthday (28), and Dvořák's New World Symphony (3, 5 and 6; mostly sold out); also a recital by Lang Lang of Bach, Schubert and Chopin is sold out (15). What non-ticketholders still have a prayer of catching this month is Deborah Voigt, fresh off the Met's new Ring cycle and singing arias by Wagner, Beethoven and Strauss under Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, who also conducts the Overture to Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro and Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherazade.

osm.ca

ATLANTA

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Bruch & Mendelssohn (May 24-26)

Young Polish violinist Stefan Jackiw can stun

audiences with his energetic performance style. Here he plays Bruch's ebullient *Scottish Fantasy.* In addition, Baroque expert Nicholas McGegan leads the orchestra in a programme that includes Mendelssohn's equally boisterous *Italian* Symphony No 4, the more refined 'Dance of the Blessed Spirits' from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Handel's Concerto Grosso in G.

atlantasymphony.org

CHARLESTON Spoleto Festival USA

Glass: Kepler (May 26, 28 & 31, June 2) Wenjing: Feng Yi Ting (May 27 & 29, June 1, 4 & 7) Howells: Requiem (May 30)

Director Sam Helfrich and conductor John Kennedy give the first American staged production of Philip Glass's Kepler, based on the life and moral conflicts of 17th-century astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler. A libretto comprised mainly of Kepler's own writings is sung in Latin and English. Another American premiere comes from composer Guo Wenjing, and it's also based on a true-life story - about the Han Dynasty's dangerous beauty Diao Chan. Armenian-Canadian film director Atom Egoyan directs a production that includes costumes by noted fashion designer Han Feng and video by Tsang Kin-wah. Finally, the Westminster Choir sings Herbert Howells's 1936 Requiem, written in response to the death of the composer's only son. Joe Miller leads his singers, who also

perform Tarik O'Regan's The Ecstasies Above.

spoletousa.org

Previews by Olivia Giovetti

OGRAPHY: WILLIAM STR







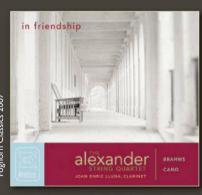
LÉO DELIBES SYLVIA & COPPELIA MARTIN WEST: CND/SAN FRANCISCO BALLET ORCHESTRA

Under the direction of Martin West, the San Francisco Ballet (the oldest professional ballet company in the US) presents two works by Léo Delibes; the delightful comedy "Coppélia" and "Sylvia," a romance filled with sighs of longing and the thrill of infatuation.



Julian von Karolyi TCHAIKOVSKY & SCHUMANN: PIANO CONCERTOS JULIAN VON KAROLYI: PIANO

Julian von Karolyi was one of the leading pianists of the 20th century, but has now unjustly faded into obscurity. Both of the pieces are with the famed Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and both are appearing on CD for the first time!



THE ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET IN FRIENDSHIP ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET/JOAN ENRIC LLUNA: CLARINET

Also Available: With Strings Attached [Foghorn Classics 2006] Gershwin & Kern [Foghorn Classics 2008]



NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG ON OUR WAY: THE JOURNEY OF NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG AND THE NEW CENTURY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

A film that weaves a live tour concert, on-camera anecdotes, rehearsal, and behind-the-scenes footage of world-renowned violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg in her new dynamic role as music director of the San Francisco-based New Century Chamber Orchestra.



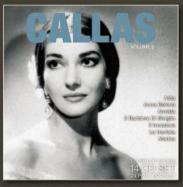
August DE BOECK PIANO CONCERTO/PRELUDE THEROIGNE DE MERICOURT JOZEF DE BEENHOUWER: PIANO

The suite from the opera Francesca finally rescues this accomplished musical drama by the late romantic Belgian composer August De Boeck from obscurity. His piano concerto is a highly original, fresh and effervescent, yet solidly constructed composition.



Max BRUCH & Felix MENDELSSOHN
VIOLIN CONCERTOS [HYBRID SACD+DYD]
PHILIPPE QUINT: VIOLIN

For the first time, two-time Grammy Award nominee violinist Philippe Quint records warhorses of the 19th century classical music repertoire.



MARIA CALLAS, VOLUME 2 LEGENDARY PERFORMANCES MARIA CALLAS: SOPRANO

Bravissimo 9914

Superstar Maria Callas (1923–1977) in her greatest roles, including the tempestuous Aida, Armida in one of Rossini's rarest operas, and the 1956 recording of *Il Barbiere Di Siviglia*, simply one of the greatest live performances ever recorded!



THE SIXTEEN
ROYAL MANUSCRIPTS: THE GENIUS OF ILLUMINATION
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS: CND/THE SIXTEEN

This disc celebrates the British Library's first major exhibition to bring together their Royal collection, a treasure trove of illuminated manuscripts from between the $9^{\rm th}$ and $16^{\rm th}$ centuries collected by the kings and queens of England.



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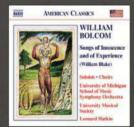
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Reviews



Laurence Vittes reviews Hanson from Seattle:

'Hanson's powerful music played by the Seattle Symphony was perfect for showing off the production team's skills' ► REVIEW ON PAGE XI



Donald Rosenberg reviews premiere Machover recordings:

'Machover would know best, but the performances here sound like a composer's dream come true' REVIEW ON PAGE XIII

Brahms



Piano Sonata No 3, Op 5. Two Rhapsodies, Op 79. Piano Pieces – Op 76; Op 116; Op 117; Op 118; Op 119 **Jerome Rose** of



Seasoned DVD pianist Rose offers up Brahms solo works

Over the past few years Jerome Rose has been setting down much of his core repertoire in front of an audience at New York's Yamaha Artist Services for DVD, including works that he's recently recorded on CD. The present DVD offers two and a half hours of solo Brahms. with no less than all of the late Piano Pieces and the youthful F minor Sonata. If anything, Rose plays the latter better in 2011 than he did in his 2007 audio-only recording. The little instances of over-pedalling and of telegraphing loud climaxes have been tempered, without any residual loss of drive or passion in the first-movement development, the Scherzo's swaggering rhythms and the finale's racing coda. The Intermezzo's foreboding funeral-march rhythms are more flexible now, yet manage to sound more insistent. Rose's long-lined, tellingly shaped Andante espressivo also gains in dramatic and dynamic scope, although this may be due to the DVD's superior high-definition sound. The short pieces, too, often reveal Rose at his seasoned best.

Notice Op 76 No 1's carefully contoured imitative writing; and if Nos 2 and 3 are a shade forthright and brusque, No 4's phrases effortlessly ebb and flow over the bar-lines. His assiduous hand-crossings in the Op 79 No 2 Rhapsody's main theme both sound and look effortless, while the Op 116 group stands out for Rose's poetic simplicity in No 2 and his insightful timing and voicing of No 5's strange harmonies. Interestingly, the Op 117 No 1 Intermezzo is relatively spacious and reserved in comparison with the businesslike urgency of the following B flat minor piece (perhaps it's a hair fast for Brahms's *Andante non troppo*, yet Rose makes it work). Op 119 features a broader, more bass-



Power and focus: Vicki Ray and the Eclipse Quartet play Feldman

oriented reading of the C major *Intermezzo* than usual, an austere, granitic *Rhapsody* and an achingly drawn-out B minor *Intermezzo*. It all adds up to a meaty, enjoyable programme. Those who want the music minus the DVD's modest yet effective camerawork and Rose's bonus bookletnotes can obtain the complete audio soundtrack by itself via MP3 download. Jed Distler

Feldman

Piano and String Quartet

Vicki Ray pf Eclipse Quartet

Bridge ® BRIDGE9369 (79' • DDD)



Feldman from specialist new music Californians

This 1985 work, written for the Kronos Quartet and pianist Aki Takahashi, has something of a cult following. It inspired at least two people I know to buy their first CD player – one to eliminate the vinyl surface noise that marred the music's hypnotic effect, the other to avoid having to get up halfway through the piece to change sides. I once found myself playing the old Kronos recording to lure myself to sleep,

only to emerge over an hour later more energised than before.

Like most listeners, I've never quite figured out how a piece so lacking in traditional structure – or even tempo and dynamic contrast – could wield such power. With only a few semitonal chord progressions and arpeggiated piano figures (never heard the same way twice), Feldman's stylistic paradox (intimate in resources, majestic in scale) rarely materialised so efficiently.

Any music student can play the notes; Feldman requires musical shamans who can summon the spirits in between. Suffice it to say, pianist Vicki Ray and the Eclipse have that power – admittedly not as authoritatively as Takahashi and the Kronos, who had the benefit of working with Feldman in his later years, but certainly enough to render most of the music's finer subtleties.

From the first moment to the last, Ray and the Eclipse stretch each sonority to breaking point, blocking anything that came before and thwarting any anticipation of what comes next. For nearly 80 minutes, they keep the listener focused entirely in the moment. **Ken Smith** *Selected comparison:*

Takahashi, Kronos Qt (2/94) (NONE) 7559 79320-2

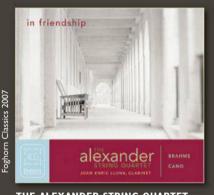






Maurice RAVEL SONATINE & MIROIRS HANNES MINNAAR: PIANO

"Hannes is a musician with a great future ahead of him. He is intelligent, curious and passionate—a winning combination." — Marin Alsop: Conductor, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra



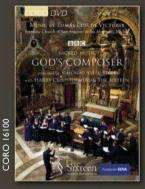
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Breathtaking performances by celebrated Spanish clarinetist Joan Enric Lluna and the ASQ! A glorious partnership spanning two decades faithfully captured by producer Judith Sherman.



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Tomás Luis de VICTORIA SACRED MUSIC: GOD'S COMPOSER CHRISTOPHERS: CND/THE SIXTEEN

Broadcast on the BBC in December 2011, this special episode of the acclaimed *Sacred Music* series marks the 400th anniversary of the death of Spanish composer Tomás Luis de Victoria.



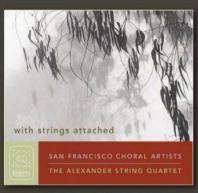
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JOZEF DE BEENHOUWER: PIANO/JANÁČEK PHILHARMONIC
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The suite from the opera Francesca finally rescues this accomplished musical drama by the late romantic Belgian composer August De Boeck from obscurity.



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Joyous, celebratory performances of exciting new works for chamber chorus and string quartet captured in superb recordings by Judith Sherman.



Antonín DVOŘÁK & George GERSHWIN VIOLIN CONCERTO & AN AMERICAN IN PARIS LIZA FERSCHTMAN: VIOLIN/MARIO VENZAGO: CND

Violinist Liza Ferschtman's name is becoming more well-known in the international music scene, and this new recording shows that she is a world-class musician we will be hearing from even more in the future!



Léo DELIBES SYLVIA & COPPÉLIA SAN FRANCISCO BALLET ORCHESTRA/MARTIN WEST: CND

Under the direction of Martin West, the San Francisco Ballet (the oldest professional ballet company in the US) presents two works by Léo Delibes; the delightful comedy "Coppélia" and "Sylvia," a romance filled with sighs of longing and the thrill of infatuation.

Hanson

•

Symphonies – No 4, 'Requiem', Op 34^a; No 5, 'Sinfonia sacra', Op 43^b. Elegy in Memory of Sergey Koussevitzky^c. Dies natalis^d

Seattle Symphony / Gerard Schwarz

Naxos American Classics © 8 559703 (70' • DDD) From Delos ^cDE3073 (3/90), ^aDE3105 (7/92), ^bDE3130 (3/93), ^dDE3160 (5/95)



More Hanson from Seattle reissued by Naxos

Howard Hanson's Fourth Symphony is exactly what a serious classical music composition would have been like in a hypothetical Hollywood movie of the 1940s and 50s. It is long and tortured, but not too long (26 minutes) and not too tortured. Despite some very fine moments and a mastery of the romantic orchestra that harkened back half a century, it is unconvincing until you place it in its time: when it was written, in 1943, although it was nominally Hanson's response to the death of his father, it must have spoken to a nation in mourning over the war. The Pulitzer Prize it won was just a natural consequence. The single-movement Fifth Symphony is marginally more compelling: 15 compact, dense minutes of epigrams and gestures lit by harmonic reflecting pools, inspired by the story of Christ's Resurrection as described in the St John's Gospel.

The other two works are of greater musical interest. In the introduction, Lutheran Christmas chorale, seven variations and finale that make up *Dies natalis*, written by the septuagenarian composer for his home state of Nebraska's centennial, Hanson regained some of his youthful energy and inspiration. The Elegy for Hanson's friend and colleague Sergey Koussevitzky remains an exquisitely touching lyric. Throughout the disc, the Seattle Symphony perform as the world-class recording ensemble they became under Schwarz and for Delos.

In fact, producer Adam Stern and engineer John Eargle had few peers when it came to combining the Decca and EMI ideals of clarity, size and warmth, and Hanson's powerful music played by the Seattle Symphony and Gerard Schwarz in Seattle's Opera House was perfect for showing off the production team's full-range skills. Two decades after Delos first released these recordings, they still shine bright, powerful in the low bass and brass, and sweet in the massed strings. Laurence Vittes

Herbert

Al Fresco (Intermezzo). The American Rose. Berceuse^a. Canzonetta^a. Devotion (A Love Sonnet). Estellita (Valse pathétique). Fleurette. Indian Summer. Légende^a. Liebes-scene^a. The Little Red Lark^a. Ocean Breezes.



Lost in time: orchestral works by Hovhaness from the Boston Modern Orchestra Project

Pan-Americana (Morceau caractéristique). Pensée amoureuse^a. Petite valse^a. Romance^a. Scherzo. Six Piano Pieces. Under the Elms. Unpublished^a - #1; #2

^aJerry Grossman vc William Hicks pfNew World F ② 80721-2 (88' • DDD)



Chamber works from a legend of the stage

Hail to New World Records for initiating a series of recordings titled 'The Foundations of the American Musical Theater'. The releases will explore the work of composers who made significant contributions to the field before the original 1943 production of *Oklahoma!* from Rodgers and Hammerstein.

The first entry in the series, curiously, contains nothing from musical theatre. But it does pay tribute to one of the genre's most important composers, Victor Herbert, with a two-disc recital of his works for cello and piano. Whether Herbert's theatrical fare is familiar or not, these delectable miniatures – most receiving their first recordings – are bound to charm.

Herbert was a virtuoso cellist before he was a composer or conductor (or champion of copyright issues), so it's not surprising that he wrote so idiomatically for the instrument. Nor is it unexpected that all of these pieces – whether for cello and piano or solo piano – are rich in melodic grace, poetry and whimsy, as well as harmonic imagination.

The music is so appealing and varied in form and mood that it's impossible to resist its intimate magic. Herbert's waltzes are especially captivating but so too are his lullabies, ballads and dance numbers. No wonder his operettas were the toast of their time. The performers

approach these gems as if they adore every note. Cellist Jerry Grossman wraps his voluptuous sound around Herbert's melodies and tosses off the occasional acrobatic feat with panache. William Hicks is a terrific partner, but he really takes off when he packs nuanced and crisp artistry into the solo piano pieces.

Donald Rosenberg

Hovhaness 'Exile Symphony'

Symphony No 1, 'Exile', Op 17 No 2. Armenian Rhapsodies - No 1, Op 45; No 2, Op 51; No 3, Op 189. Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Strings, Op 344^a. Song of the Sea^b

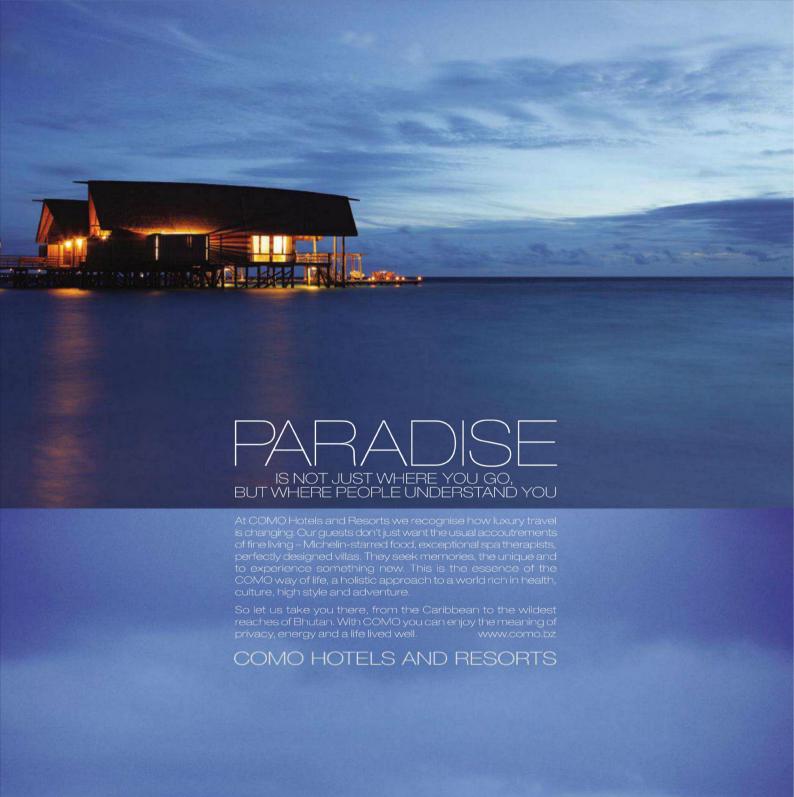
^aKenneth Radnofsky ssax ^bJohn McDonald *pf*Boston Modern Orchestra Project / Gil Rose
BMOP/sound ® 1020 (68' • DDD)



BMOP with Hovhaness spanning five decades

With more than 400 works to his credit, Alan Hovhaness could hardly claim writer's block as a problem. Consistency, though, was another matter, but as the pieces on this collection point out, even in those moments when Hovhaness didn't quite find the right balance between his Armenian musical tradition, neo-romantic lyricism and quasi-transcendental mysticism, his pieces still came out sounding like no other composer.

He did have his models, however. *Song of the Sea* (1933), the earliest and least distinctive piece here, has a few touches of Strauss. Symphony No 1, *Exile* (1938), his breakthrough both stylistically and professionally, clearly lives in the shadow of Sibelius. And his three *Armenian Rhapsodies* (1944) have precedents in





Vaughan Williams and other orchestral folklorists. Collectively, these early works reveal a young composer not terribly concerned with structural purity, his pieces having as much in common with the fantasia as they do the respective forms in their titles.

The Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Strings (1980) bypasses the aggressiveness of Hovhaness's mature years, harking back to those earlier pieces. As in the symphony, formal development is hard to find; nor is the soloist actually pitted against the orchestra in traditional concerto fashion. Rather, the composer uses his solo instrument to flesh out, and sometimes lead, his orchestral sonorities.

Conductor Gil Rose's true success here is in rendering these works timeless – not simply linking the composer's early and late works but in offering superb performances that, for those who mentally follow a stylistic timeline, make this music extremely difficult to place. **Ken Smith**

Machover

"...but not simpler..."

Sparkler^a, Interludes^b - No 1, 'After Bach'; No 2, After Byrd'. Three Hyper-Dim-Sums^c, ...but not simpler...^c, Jeux Deux^d

^dMichael Chertock *Hyperpiano* ^{ab}Tod Machover *elecs*^ciO Quartet ^{ad}Odense Symphony Orchestra /
Paul Mann

Bridge (F) BRIDGE9346 (54' • DDD)



New interfaces explored by the director of the MIT media lab

The American composer Tod Machover has expanded the palette of music in copious directions, often using electronics to achieve what humans alone cannot. Among the inventions that take sound to previously unexplored terrain are his Hyperinstruments and Hyperorchestra, which promote sonic variety and boost virtuosity.

Rather than gimmicks, these advances have crucial and winning impacts on the expressive possibilities in Machover's music, as can be heard on this absorbing disc. Unless you've heard this composer's music before, you've never experienced anything like these pieces.

The recording's title, '...but not simpler...', is a quote by Albert Einstein that Machover adopted for the string quartet he wrote in 2005. The score, minus electronic input, is a cavalcade of contrasting ideas, with each player playing independent material. Lovely themes emerge from seeming disorder and the narrative is a tantalising blend of tranquillity and turmoil.

Three Hyper-Dim-Sums – written with Hyperscore technology Machover and colleagues devised at MIT's Media Lab – are tangy morsels for string quartet. They are framed by interludes, After Bach and After Byrd, which combine tidbits of those composers' music with Machover's own sonic musings.

The disc begins and ends with blockbusters. *Sparkler* melds an orchestra with live electronics in a spectrum of colours and explosive sonorities. In *Jeux Deux*, a wild and disarming tribute to Debussy's last orchestral work, the soloist plays a Hyperpiano – a Yamaha Disklavier Grand – which outdoes Liszt, thanks to software that takes the solo part beyond the realm of mortal possibility.

Machover would know best, but the performances here by the iO Quartet, pianist Michael Chertock and the Odense Symphony Orchestra under Paul Mann sound like something approaching a composer's dream come true. **Donald Rosenberg**

'Favorites'

Bach Partita No 2 BWV 1004 - Chaconne
Britten Nocturnal after John Dowland
Ivanov-Kramskoi Gust. Prelude. Melancholy Waltz.
Improvisation. Song Without Words
Paganini Grand Sonata in A, Op 35
David Leisner gt
Azica ® 71268 (72' • DDD)



Solo recital from the Manhattan School's guitar faculty chair

Who would suspect that this recital's opening salvo, a charming, idiomatically Spanish-sounding guitar miniature called *Gust*, actually was composed by a Russian guitarist Alexander Ivanov-Kramskoi (1912-1973)? Several of his other similarly tuneful and unpretentious pieces provide points of respite between major works. It says a lot that David Leisner's technically immaculate and musically mindful interpretation of Britten's *Nocturnal* can hold its own with Julian Bream's two reference versions.

In fact, Leisner's own prowess as a composer reveals itself in his stronger melody/accompaniment textural differentiation in certain variations. His arrangement of the Paganini Grand Sonata stands out for the third variation movement's march-like swagger, while his arrangement of the Bach Chaconne manages to take full advantage of the guitar's resources without compromising the original's formal design and cumulative sweep. One can say that about Leisner's interpretation, which is characterised by tightly knit tempo relationships and intelligently scaled dynamics. His booklet-notes are both informative and personal. All told, an immensely satisfying and thoughtfully put-together programme that should please all guitar fans.

Jed Distler

'Gulfstream'

'American Chamber Music'

Copland Sextet for Clarinet, Piano and String Quartet^a L Larsen Rodeo Queen of Heaven Lieuwen Gulfstream Schickele Quartet for Clarinet, Violin, Cello and Piano

Enhakē with ^a**Corinne Stillwell** *vn* ^a**Pamela Ryan** *vn* Naxos American Classics © 8 559692 (55' • DDD)



Florida ensemble take the pulse of US chamber music

What the Verdehr Trio has done for the clarinet trio, the Enhakē ensemble may one day do for the clarinet quartet. Enhakē have a long way to go, of course, but the way in which this recital brings together music of the very highest quality which is rarely encountered in the concert hall, in performances of probing intensity, is encouraging.

Particularly pleasing are the startling sounds and dimensions of Libby Larsen's rowdy wannabe, *Rodeo Queen of Heaven*, commissioned by Enhakē and premiered at Weill Hall in 2010. The composer was inspired to make all sorts of seriously playful sounds in pursuit of a narrative provided by Arthur Lopez's paintedwood Madonna and Child in rodeo regalia, a gun slung on the Madonna's hip, a cowboy hat crowning the Holy Child. Incongruously, Larsen also juxtaposes the solemn chant of a medieval Mass from her childhood in Minneapolis, but it is hardly noticeable.

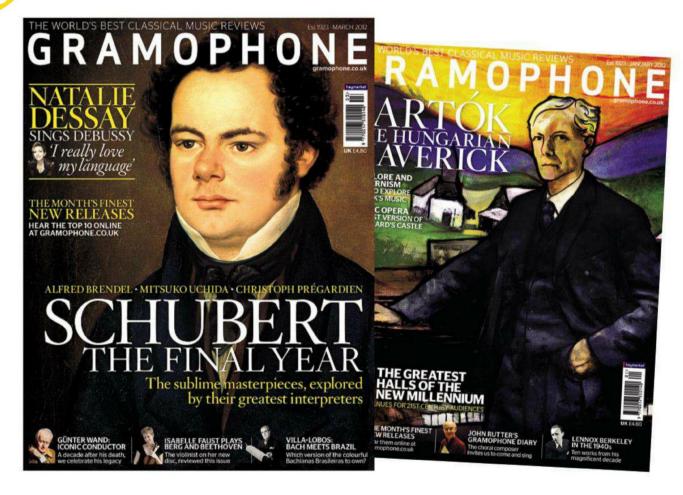
Peter Lieuwen's mostly mellifluous *Gulfstream* (an aural portrait of the Atlantic current, not the American touring caravans) was also dedicated to Enhakē; in addition to its compelling eco-theme, it celebrated the Messiaen centenary in 2008. The music is entirely noble, and even its few harmonic doubts are washed away by the sheer beauty of the instrumental writing.

In the two better-known works, Peter Schickele's authentically populist and also beautifully written Quartet (its third recording) and Copland's Sextet (1937), a pared-down arrangement of the composer's Second Symphony, Enhakē show that they can handle the demanding requirements of 20th-century music with equally great skill and aplomb. Pianist Eun-Hee Park's fast, light-fingered touch in the Schickele provides numerous moments of purely physical delight.

This recording was sponsored by and recorded at Florida State University College of Music, where Enhakē formed in 2007 (their name was taken from the Native American Seminole word for 'sound'). The recorded sound is crisp, clear and clean, and you hear everything each instrument does without losing the impact or flavour of the whole. Good booklet-notes by Elisa Weber. Laurence Vittes

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THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



'I've been an admirer of Yevgeny Sudbin since he came on the scene,' says Gramophone critic **GEOFFREY NORRIS**, author of this month's Session Report, which sees the pianist record Rachmaninov's Paganini Rhapsody. 'He's extremely intelligent, always with strong ideas, and can convey them in a very lucid and interesting way.'



STEPHEN PLAISTOW's first encounter with Richard Goode was in the mid-1960s when he worked as producer on the pianist's recording: 'His playing carried a quicksilver musical charge.' When they next met in the 1990s, Gramophone was writing an article about him: 'Talking with him, you take away insights that fuel your thoughts.'



'To say that Beethoven remains perpetually contemporary has become a rhetorical cliché,' says this month's Specialist Guide author PHILIP CLARK. 'But that musicians continue to recompose, improvise upon and create trippy pieces of electronica out of his works assures me that he is indeed still at the vanguard of modern composition.'



GRAMOPHONE

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Welcoming the first 50 into Gramophone's Hall of Fame



For the Gramophone reader, it's a hypothetical question of course, but still one worth asking: why do we need another recording of a Mozart piano concerto, or Beethoven symphony, or Tosca - or any of the works recorded so many times that you could fill a shelf with one of them alone? The answer is, simply, that music is inexhaustible and infinitely complex; that each new performance has the potential to reveal new ideas, beauty

and power, and that no single one can ever claim to be definitive. And what makes each recording different from the next? It's the expertise, insight, understanding, musicianship and vision of the people involved, and perhaps something of the period in which it was recorded. Every generation, since the first wax cylinders were pressed more than a century ago, has had its inspirational recording artists - as well as A&R executives and producers, without whom the artists would not have made it into the studio, let alone on to tape. It is these people we are here celebrating as we unveil the first 50 names to be welcomed into the Gramophone Hall of Fame. It is thanks to them that a new interpretation of an oft-recorded work

'Music is inexhaustible and infinitely complex...Each new performance can potentially reveal new ideas, so no single one can ever claim to be definitive

can compel us to admire the music anew and more than justify that ever-expanding catalogue.

We originally drew up a longlist (we didn't include composers, unless they happened to be prolific recording artists, too) and then invited you, our readers - both in print and online - to nominate up to eight names each. Some of the names to have made the final 50 you would expect to see there - Karajan, Callas, du Pré, Kleiber, Pavarotti – others may be more of a surprise. For each one we've then invited another leading musician, or in some cases one of our critics,

> to comment on how that person's art and legacy or ongoing work - is so important to us.

And this is just the beginning: every year, we will admit another group of people into the Gramophone Hall of Fame; between

now and the end of the year, feel free to send us your suggestions of who should be on next year's longlist.



martin.cullingford@haymarket.com

GRAMOPHONE Choice



Informed by our unrivalled panel of critics, we choose the month's must-hear recordings



Recording of the Month

He has little inclination to bathe the passagework in an impressionistic haze as many do, choosing to emphasise the virtuosity of the writing'

FOR THE REVIEW BY JEREMY NICHOLAS, TURN TO PAGE 72

DEBUSSY. SZYMANOWSKI

Debussy Pour le piano. Estampes. L'isle joyeuse Szymanowski Prelude and Fugue. Piano Sonata No 1, Op 8 Rafał Blechacz pł DG 477 9548GH



Hear every Gramophone Choice recording. including Recording of the Month, through the online Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk

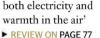


DVOŘAK

Cello Concerto. The Water Goblin. In Nature's Realm **Zuill Bailey VC**

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra / Jun Märkl

Telarc TEL32927-02 'This wonderfully spontaneous new version tends to sweep the board...there is both electricity and warmth in the air'





FALLA

España. Homenajes Jean-Efflam Bavouzet pf **BBC Philharmonic** Orchestra / Juanjo Mena Chandos CHAN10694 'Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's performance casts its own spell, sultry and scintillating as required'

El sombrero de tres picos.

Noches en los jardines de

► REVIEW ON PAGE 79



SHOSTAKOVICH

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2 Alexander Melnikov pf **Mahler Chamber** Orchestra / **Teodor Currentzis**

Harmonia Mundi HMC90 2014 'The Second Concerto's slow

movement...to call this breathtaking would be an understatement'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 83



BEETHOVEN

Piano Trios Nos 1 & 7.

'Archduke' Peter Cropper vn Moray Welsh vc Martin Roscoe pf Sonimage SON11102 'Martin Roscoe leads his partners in an interpretation of rarefied transcendence that exalts the

► REVIEW ON PAGE 89

whole work'



MEDTNER

Arabesques. Dithyrambs. Elegies, etc Hamish Milne pf Hyperion CDA67851/2 'No pianist has done more for Medtner's reputation than Hamish Milne...he tells you that a still neglected and misunderstood composer demands to be heard'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 98



YSAŸE
Six Solo Violin Sonatas
Tai Murray vn
Harmonia Mundi
HMU90 7569
'Everything is thrown
into the melting pot
− Debussy, jazz, folk −
resulting in a disc that
makes me want to hear
Murray playing all of
them, so coherently has
she pulled them together'
▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 98



BRAHMS
Schicksalslied.
Alto Rhapsody, etc
Collegium Vocale, Ghent;
Champs-Elysées Orchestra
/ Philippe Herreweghe
PHI LPH003

'Herreweghe allows the music to evolve with a wonderful feeling of spaciousness in which Brahms's textures are beautifully revealed'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 100



BRAHMS
Ein deutsches Requiem
Soloists; Monteverdi
Choir; Orchestre
Révolutionnaire
et Romantique /
John Eliot Gardiner
SDG SDG706
'Gardiner returns to
the Requiem with
a root-and-branch
rethink of the work's
very sound'

REVIEW ON PAGE 101



'TUNE THY MUSICKE TO THY HART' Stile Antico; Fretwork Harmonia Mundi HMU80 7554 'Stile Antico's sleek tuning and supple

tuning and supple attention to words bring a carefully plotted span (over 120 years) of sacred styles into our living rooms with rare success'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 108



.....

MOZART
Die Zauberflöte
Soloists; Chorus and
Orchestra of La Scala,
Milan / Roland Böer;
William Kentridge dir
Opus Arte OA1066D;
OABD7099D
'Don't miss this
visually enchanting
and thought-

provoking treat'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 112



Reissue SCHUBERT

String Quartets, etc

Busch Quartet

Regis RRC3012

'What makes this
particular reading so
special is a combination
of tautness and warmth
that allows the stringplaying to sound as
intimate as the human
voice in song'

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The choral music of Bo Hansson; Werner Güra takes a Schubertian journey; 'Being Beauteous' with Anu Komsi

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Through 10 diverse recordings, Philip Clark celebrates the composers, arrangers and performers who have dared to make their own transcriptions of Beethoven's music

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GRAMOPHONE HALL OF FAME Our inaugural Hall of Fame celebrates the 50 people who have changed recorded classical music, as voted for by <i>Gramophone</i> readers. From Abbado to Schwarzkopf, the list is a tribute to classical world's greatest names – with more to be added each	the
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Actor and Strictly Come Dancing winner Tom Chambers









23 Karajan, Brendel and Bartoli join the Hall of Fame



47 Celebrate summertime with the best live music



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Naxos Highlights

New Releases January - April · 2012



GERSHWIN

Concerto in F

"Orion Weiss plays the Concerto with great panache... Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic give him excellent support."

Audiophilia



POTT

In the Heart of Things

"This is a powerful disc of important music."

Gramophone



VERDI

Complete Ballet Music from the Operas

"[The BSO] were just wonderful to work with. They too were truly inspired. They had a great time with the whole project. And it shows!"

José Serebrier

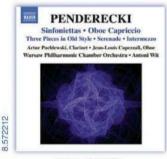


ROUSSEL

The Spider's Banquet

"Stéphane Denève's sprightly RSNO matches Roussel's sophisticated inventiveness"

The Observer



PENDERECKI Sinfoniettas

"Played with elegant warmth by the WPCO in the latest of Antoni Wit's excellent Penderecki series."

The Observer

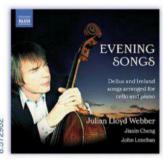


DOVE

The Passing of the Year

"Dove has a distinctive voice, an instantly recognisable sound-world. He has fantasy, humour, a gift for storytelling and theatrical moments."

The Times

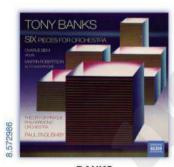


EVENING SONGS

Delius and Ireland Songs arr. for Cello

"This is an ideal collection to while away the summer evenings."

Gramophone



BANKS

SIX

"A very exciting project"

Classic FM



JANÁČEK

Taras Bulba

"Wit's Warsaw Philharmonic forces plug directly into the emotional power of Janáček's music."

Classic FM Magazine on Janáček: Glagolitic Mass

Naxos is 25 this year and to celebrate we will be offering a different free download and 25% off sale every month.

For more details please go to www.classicsonline.com









"Something posseses me - when I'm at the piano

I'm a different person". These are the words from the superb young pianist, who, at the age of just eighteen, won a sensational victory in the 2009 London International Piano Competition, with an electrifying performance of Prokofiev's Piano Concerto no.3.

His Decca Classics debut album showcases his passionate performance style through the concept of Danses diaboliques, including Horowitz's incredible version of Saint-Saëns/Liszt Danse macabre – wildly virtuosic pieces, which perfectly capture the white-knuckle ride that is Behzod Abduraimov's style.

Behzod Abduraimov **Prokofiev, Liszt, Saint-Saens**1CD 4783301 www.deccaclassics.com

DECCA

GRAMOPHONE Online

The magazine is just the beginning. Visit **gramophone.co.uk** for...



















CELEBRATING THE HALL OF FAME

You've read our coverage of the 50 artists who have been welcomed into *Gramophone*'s inaugural Hall of Fame – but there's much more on our website. Online, you'll find, for each artist, a comprehensive biography and a number of recommended recordings. We've also delved into our Archive, which stretches back to 1923, to find thought-provoking articles relating to each of the top 50, written by *Gramophone*'s best writers, past and present.



LISTEN TO THE GRAMOPHONE PODCAST

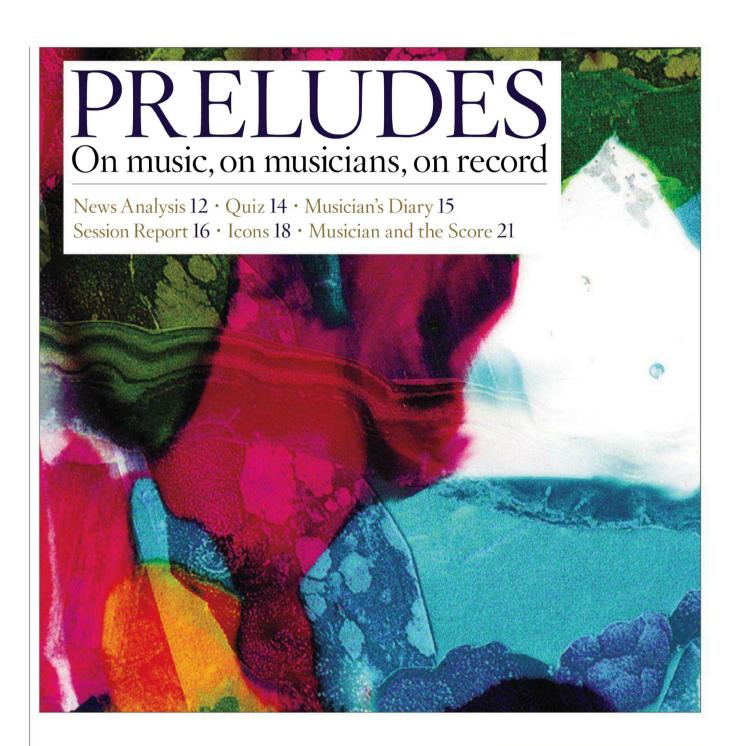
Our monthly *Gramophone* Podcast features fascinating interviews with key artists – and is free to listen to, either via the *Gramophone* Player or at iTunes. In our May edition, editor Martin Cullingford speaks to Mark Bebbington about recording Bliss's complete solo piano music for Somm; Potton Hall's Jeremy Hayes interviews pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy during a recording session for the latest in his Rachmaninov piano music series for Decca; and deputy editor Sarah Kirkup speaks to trumpeter Tine Thing Helseth about her new recording, 'Storyteller', for EMI Classics. Don't miss it!



APPRECIATING WALTER ARLEN

Born Walter Aptowitzer in the wrong place at the wrong time, Arlen is one of the few surviving members of the lost generation of composers stifled or scattered by the Third Reich. Now, at the age of 92, he has just witnessed the first CD release of his music. Michael White meets him.

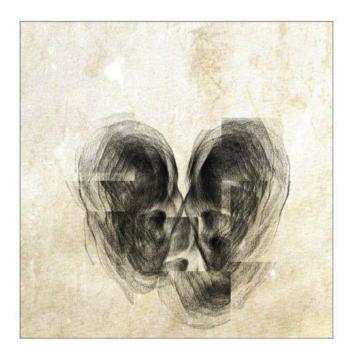




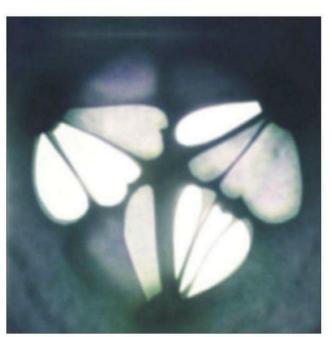
















Debut Discs, debut artwork

Where NMC Recordings, Somerset House, London

The details

Winning cover designs for NMC's Debut Discs, which will give 12 emerging composers their first dedicated recordings

t first glance, these arresting, kaleidoscopic images appear to have little in common. But they were all conceived by top students at London art college Central St Martins, who entered a competition to design the original cover work for NMC's Debut Discs series. Launching in June, the series has been created by the contemporary British music label to give 12 emerging British composers their first dedicated recordings. The project has enlisted the support of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and aims to increase the profile of Huw Watkins, Dai Fujikura and others. Judging the artwork entries were designer Vaughan Oliver, composer Colin Matthews and journalist Tom Service.

'Broadening classical appeal need not be synonymous with dumbing down'

t's been a month of outreach and sharing for UK music, with talk of bringing classical works to the people and schemes to generate publicity by linking the worlds of classical and celebrity. While such attempts to broaden appeal can easily - and cynically – be labelled 'dumbing down', three projects in particular represent a genuine effort to present 'pure' classical music in a palatable form for the wider public.

First up is the London Symphony Orchestra's Open Air Classics, launched in February. In partnership with BMW, the orchestra has pledged to bring free annual open-air concerts to London's Trafalgar Square over the next three years. The decision to buck the trend of open-air classical music in picturesque, rural locations is based on principal conductor Valery Gergiev's desire to 'take music beyond the concert hall' into 'a historical and busy location'. And if performing intricate, sometimes hushed music in London's trafficfilled tourist district seems a gamble, the all-Stravinsky programme

'These projects represent a genuine effort to present "pure" classical music in a palatable form for the public'

is even more so. But Gergiev is confident the public will enjoy the works, citing the success of his recent New York Stravinsky cycle in Avery Fisher Hall. 'We don't always need to make safe choices of Mozart or Beethoven,' he says.

Also keen to make an impression is the Royal Opera House, which has teamed up with the BBC to launch another edition of Maestro, the 2008 conducting series won by comedian Sue Perkins. Maestro at the Opera, filmed over 10 weeks, will teach four celebrities - mathematician Marcus du Sautoy, Strictly Come Dancing judge Craig Revel Horwood, comedian Josie Lawrence and DJ Trevor Nelson – to conduct an opera. They will compete for the prize of conducting a complete act on the main Covent Garden stage. Both the Royal Opera and the BBC are keen to emphasise that their wish 'to bring a broader audience to the heart of opera productions' does not mean the show will be opera-lite. The involvement



of high-calibre judges Sir Mark Elder, Danielle de Niese and orchestral musician Dominic Seldis lends the programme credibility and the task attempted by the celebrity foursome requires real musical talent. There are also plans to provide backstage access, including interviews with music director Sir Antonio Pappano and director of opera Kasper Holten.

Finally, English National Opera has launched its Mini Operas competition, a worldwide online search for scriptwriters, composers and film-makers judged by writer Will Self, composer Nico Muhly and film-maker Terry Gilliam. By combining the disciplines, ENO is hoping 'to preserve and redefine' the future of opera, generating interest from areas of the arts not normally associated with the operatic world.

akari Oramo is set to bring a touch of Finnish culture to British Oshores in his new role as the BBC Symphony Orchestra's chief conductor. Succeeding Jiří Bělohlávek, Oramo's first performance at the helm will be at the 2013 BBC Proms. The conductor is currently in his 10th and final season as the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra's chief and spent 10 years as music director of the CBSO, during which time he developed a love for British music. In less positive news, conductor Seiji Ozawa is to take a year off to recover from ill health. The former Boston Symphony Orchestra music director was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer in 2010 and completed treatment last year. 6

Specialist Classical Chart The UK's best-selling pure classical releases

- (New) 'Legacy' Violin Works David Garrett Decca
- (11) 'Los pajaros perdidos' L'Arpeggiata / Pluhar Virgin Classics
- (2) Anthony Hopkins 'Composer' CBSO / Michael Seal Classic FM
- (New) Penderecki. Greenwood Orch Wks Aukso Orchestra Nonesuch
- (3) Miloš 'The Guitar' Miloš Karadaglić DG
- (5) Ravel. Messiaen 'Poèmes' Renée Fleming Decca
- (1) Berg. Beethoven Violin Concs Isabelle Faust; Orch Mozart / Abbado HM
- (4) Paul Mealor 'A Tender Light' Tenebrae; RPO / Nigel Short Sony Classical
- (12) Debussy. Szymanowski Piano Wks Rafał Blechacz DG
- (New) Massenet Werther Villazón; ROH / Pappano DG

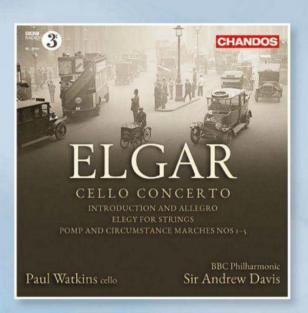


Violinist David Garrett goes straight to the top of the chart with 'Legacy

Chart for week ending March 17 (previous week's position in brackets). Visit gramophone.co.uk for weekly updates

of the chart, along with reviews



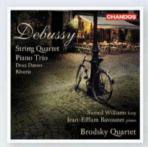


Disc of the Month Elgar

Orchestral Works

Paul Watkins is the cello soloist in a recording that showcases some of Elgar's most popular works, including the famous Cello Concerto, Pomp and Circumstance Marches Nos 1-5, and Introduction and Allegro. He is accompanied by the BBC Philharmonic and Sir Andrew Davis.

CHANDOS New Releases



Johan Halvorsen







Debussy String Ouartet Piano Trio

The Brodsky Quartet releases its second disc on Chandos, with guest soloists Jean-Efflam Bayouzet in the rare Piano Trio and Sioned Williams in the Deux Danses. The Quartet's previous disc on Chandos, Petits-fours, was released in February 2012.

CHAN 10717

Halvorsen

Orchestral Works, Vol. 4

Neeme Järvi and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra have reached the fourth and final volume in their Halvorsen series. Classic FM said of a previous volume: 'Every phrase pulsates with charm and energy... the simplest of gestures feel like musical gold.'

CHAN 10710

Brahms Works for Solo Piano, Vol. 1

This disc marks the beginning of a new series, and the first major project with the internationally acclaimed pianist Barry Douglas as an exclusive Chandos artist. Volume 1 offers an attractively varied recital that culminates in the monumental 'Handel' Variations.

CHAN 10716

British Flute Concertos

The Welsh flautist Emily Beynon plays flute concertos by Sir Lennox Berkeley, William Alwyn, and Jonathan Dove, as well as Berkeley's orchestration of Francis Poulenc's Flute Sonata. She is accompanied by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Bramwell Tovey.

CHAN 10718

Telemann

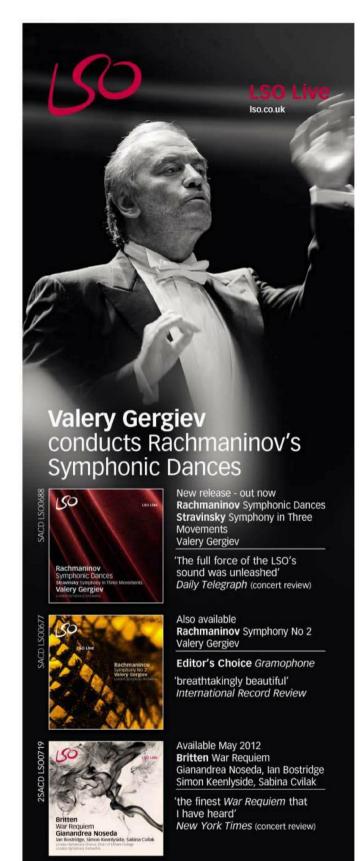
The Autograph Scores

The works presented here all survive in autograph scores. They are performed by Collegium Musicum 90 and Simon Standage, who in 2010 was awarded the Georg-Philipp-Telemann-Preis in recognition of his contribution towards promoting the composer's reputation.

CHAN 0787



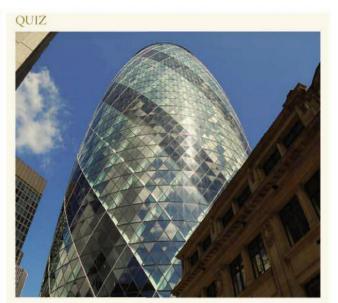




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To view the complete LSO Live catalogue or order online visit Iso.co.uk

LSO Live - the energy and emotion you only experience live



The Gherkin would have been my near neighbour

Who am I?

Pit your wits against Gramophone

I run my business in the City of London, just a stone's throw along the road from where the IRA were later to blow up the Baltic Exchange and where nowadays stands that iconic architectural structure known universally as the Gherkin.

My occupation sounds like something that might make you tipsy and I have a firstclass assortment of stock – there's no cheaper house in the trade. And, if you want it, I make a reduction on taking a quantity.

I reside at number 70 and a 50-year-old British author, who has collaborated in an unauthorised biography of a living former British prime minister, has used my address in several of his novels, although I am never there at the time.

I share a name with one of the most successful generals in Britain's history, after whom a capital city was named. What's more, I share a name with an English city worth just half a bishopric.

Curiously, it seems that my topsy-turvy artistic parents have had better-known offspring, but I maintain that my patter is up there with the best of them.

Oh, my name is...



My North Island part-namesake

HOW TO ENTER

Visit **gramophone.co.uk/win** - you will need to be registered and logged in to gramophone.co.uk Entries close at 2pm on Monday June 11, 2012. The prize is a selection of classical CDs. Open to website users aged 18 or over. No cash alternative. Prizes are non-transferable. Only one entry per person. For full terms and conditions, visit **gramophone.co.uk**

FEBRUARY ISSUE WINNER

The answer was Hans Sachs

The first correct answer drawn was submitted by Thomas Smith of Greenboro, USA, who wins a selection of CDs.

Joyce DiDonato

As Jake Heggie's opera Dead Man Walking is released on CD, the mezzo reflects on the experience of playing Sister Helen Prejean

ast year, I reprised the role of Sister Helen Prejean, the activist nun and author, in Jake Heggie's opera *Dead Man Walking*.

It was a role with which I made my debut in 2002 at New York City Opera, and it was a staggering, life-altering story I knew I had to return to one day. Houston Grand Opera gave me that chance in February of 2011 and, once again, my life was rocked by the themes and the people involved in this iconic American Opera.

At first glance, the opera violently raises the hot-button issue of the death penalty by relating to us the true story of a guilty rapist and murderer sentenced to his execution on death row. But as we learn more about the characters – the criminal, the nun, the mother, the victims' parents – the questions of forgiveness and compassion enter the fray and we see that no one wins in this tragic and flawed system. As we rehearsed with great intensity and focus, we were all forced to examine how we felt about vengeance, and justice, and forgiveness.

Never did we fall on to easy answers. There were always more boiling questions, always different angles cropping up to pester and unsettle us. I slowly became aware that the grand theme of this piece

'Sister Helen said, "I don't know squat about opera but there's gotta be tunes"

didn't belong solely to a distant setting on death row, but instead it was asking us to examine our own views of just who may be deserving of love, or forgiveness.

Sister Helen joined us in person for the week leading up to our opening night, and a panel discussion was arranged. The over-capacity crowd, comprised mostly of donors and supporters of the opera – all from the hometown Harris County, once famous for its vigorous employment of the death penalty – was eager to gain insight into the opera and the charged topics it addresses. I felt a very strong desire for understanding emerging from some, as well as a stiffening of backbones as others hesitated to waver in their long-held beliefs. The atmosphere was charged and thrilling and, refreshingly, entirely civil.

The question arose of how Sister Helen felt when she learned that Jake wished to write an opera about her story. Her reaction was, 'Now Jake, I don't know squat about opera, but you ain't one of those *atonal* composers, are you? I mean, there's gotta be some *tunes* in there, OK?' She then gave full license to Jake to tell the story he needed to tell, with only one condition: it was to remain a story about redemption, the very way she experienced it in her own life.

This led to the most arresting question of the evening, which left Sister Helen nearly speechless – something close friends say never happens. A woman rose to ask her what she thought Patrick Sonnier (the man/criminal portrayed in the opera) would think about his story



This run of Dead Man Walking marked Frederica von Stade's farewell to the operatic stage. Her inspiration and love for the theatre was evident in how joyfully she embraced her final show



Interesting labelling of one of the set pieces!



During a break, I took this shot of the colourful, evocative set



Philip Cutlip preparing for a stage rehearsal as Joseph De Rocher



With Sister Helen Prejean after the panel discussion

being made into an opera. To stop and think about it, how ludicrous does it seem that a violent man born into total poverty, barely educated, drifting in and out of the world of crime and drugs all his life, executed in the electric chair, would be the 'star' of a classical opera seen in five different countries over the span of a decade? The question stopped Sister Helen in her tracks and, after recovering, she told us all with the greatest confidence and assurance that he would have supported it 'if, Sister, you think it's gonna help people'.

During every single performance of *Dead Man Walking*, smack in the middle of the heart of Harris County, the audience remained utterly spellbound throughout the entire piece, riveted by the unfurling of this unlikely but immediately topical story which struggles with unresolved issues that are the source of great unease in our country. Jake Heggie, Sister Helen Prejean and Patrick Sonnier – such an improbable trio – united forces to offer people a chance to look inside themselves, posing questions that are not politically correct to address. They got people talking and discussing and examining ideas that justly matter in life: all those necessary things that art is called to do. I feel immensely fortunate to have borne witness to such an epic event. **G**

▶ To read Gramophone's review of Dead Man Walking, turn to page 110

gramophone.co.uk GRAMOPHONE MAY 2012 15



SESSION REPORT Ticciati records Berlioz Work Berlioz's Symphonie fantastique Artists Scottish Chamber Orchestra Venue Usher Hall, Edinburgh

Conductor Robin Ticciati Producer Philip Hobbs | Engineers Philip Hobbs & Calum Malcolm

Assistant engineer Robert Cammidge Dates October 7-10, 2011 Words Kate Molleson

here was a quiet sense of occasion about this recording session. The previous week the Scottish Chamber Orchestra had performed Berlioz's Symphonie fantastique for the first time in their history; this was to be their first recording of the piece. Indeed, it was to be their first recording of anything at all under their young principal conductor Robin Ticciati, and - a reminder of just how quickly he's catapulted to Glyndebourne, the Met and more - only the third professional recording of Ticciati's career.

The live shows had been thrilling. Ticciati is a self-confessed 'Berlioz nut' (a passion inherited from his close mentor Sir Colin Davis) and he drew SCO playing that was lithe, energetic and detailed to a degree impossible from a larger band. But would that thrill survive the scrutiny of close microphones and an empty Usher Hall? Would the energy translate to disc?

Day three of recording. At a cafe down the road from the Usher Hall, a sizeable contingent of the orchestra is stocking up on snacks and caffeine before the morning session. Ticciati is first in the queue for coffee, taking orders from the players. In the Usher Hall's makeshift control booth - a dressing room to one side of the stage producer Philip Hobbs is already in place, fingers poised to begin.

Hobbs is chief engineer of Linn Records and is known to have one of the most fastidious pairs of ears in Scotland. 'It's great to record Symphonie fantastique with a young conductor,' he says between takes. 'Young man's music. Real pacing-around-the-bedroom stuff.'

Hobbs has worked closely with the SCO on other projects and knows their sound inside out. 'They're the most transparent gauge I've ever come across,' he says, 'completely different under different 'Why did we do the opening 100 times? Because it's one of the most difficult moments in all of music - Robin Ticciati

conductors. Luckily with Robin they sound superb. There are real soft edges to the way they play for him.'

Two obvious factors define the SCO's approach to Symphonie fantastique: size (Berlioz wrote the piece for a much larger orchestra) and period style. Hobbs says that size hasn't been a problem 'because in some symphony orchestras, any time the violin-writing ventures above third position, half of the section drops out. With the SCO, every player takes responsibility for their role in the group, so that doesn't happen.'

The second concern – period style – is more interesting. Ultimately it's a question of bow period; this recording isn't at Berlioz's pitch, for example, which would have been approximately a quarter-tone lower. But Ticciati has chosen a unique configuration of natural and piston horns that provides a remarkable colour. It's not period performance but it has a definite period sensibility.

Alec Frank-Gemmill, the SCO's principal horn player, says that braving those natural horns is a classic Ticciati tactic.







- 1 Members of the SCO prepare for the session in various ways: some practise difficult passages, others check messages on their phones!
- 2 A First Violin part Robin Ticciati uses the Bärenreiter edition
- **3** The microphone rig that captures the performance in SACD multichannel sound
- 4 Percussionist Kate Openshaw with the offstage bells used in 'Dream of a Witches' Sabbath'

'Other conductors would have gone for instruments guaranteed to play in tune and articulate perfectly; Robin agreed we should opt for the best sound character. The danger adds to the performance!'

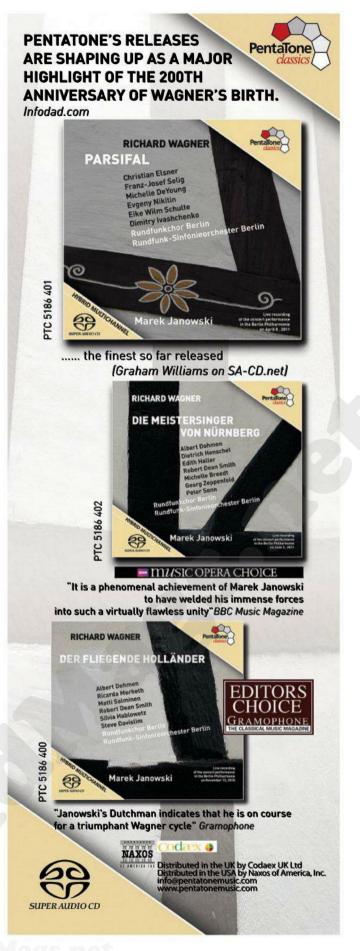
During the takes, the orchestra is deadly focused. When a Linn photographer tiptoes into the hall, the players turn to glare en masse, irritated by the intrusion. Ticciati ever so politely asks the photographer to make herself scarce.

But most remarkable is what happens between takes. It would be normal for the conductor, and perhaps section leaders, to join the engineer in the control booth to check the takes. But the entire orchestra? After the first run-through, the control room is packed, players jostling cross-legged on the floor, following their scores and marking adjustments.

It takes the whole morning to get the *Symphonie*'s first movement down. Afterwards, Ticciati explains the immense challenge of this music: it's the give-and-take, the sense of scale, getting those magical triplets in the first few bars to really float. 'Why did we do the opening 100 times over? Because it's one of the most difficult moments in all of music.

'But this recording will be special. The great Berlioz scholar David Cairns came to the session yesterday – what an honour! It cast a real gravitas across the whole thing.' Ticciati uses the phrase 'Hollywood version' – or rather, that's what he wants to avoid in this recording. 'I hear this piece as an opera. It's incredibly vivid, but too many performances overdo it. Think of those tiny sighing figures in the violins at the beginning; big orchestras simply gloss over the whole effect. With this group we can find those details but, because it's the SCO, there's drama, too. The million-dollar balance!' **G**

▶ To read Gramophone's review, turn to page 76



Richard Goode

As the pianist approaches his 69th birthday, **Stephen Plaistow** pays tribute to an artist who, by taking the slow route, has produced performances of unquestionable quality

ike all the best musician-pianists, Richard Goode appears to run and run. Every time we hear him, he impresses us as better than we remembered, surprising us, surpassing our expectations and communicating perceptions that stay in the mind. 'He was in fine form, wasn't he?' said a friend after Goode's Royal Festival Hall recital a few weeks back; yes, but so were Schumann and Chopin – better still.

'It isn't about me,' Goode might have said, but of course he was the pianist we had come to hear. It's not an easy thing, winning through to that 'second simplicity' (as I believe Schnabel called it), touching the wellspring of the music so that, just for those moments, it seems to be playing by itself. Perceiving and understanding and mastery are of course the start of getting it off the page; in performance, making everything happen at the right time is the hard part. No wonder some artists of Goode's temperament take the slow route in a lifetime's work and are disinclined to make as many recordings as we might like.

At the age of 33, Alfred Brendel had completed a recording of all the Beethoven sonatas, his first, together with most of the variations and other solo piano works: 'I just plunged into an adventure, the consequences of which I could no more foresee than could the recording company that had put its trust in me.' I frequently think of Brendel and Goode as kindred spirits, not so much because of the Austro-German repertoire in which they have overlapped but because of their inquiring minds. They share a ceaseless intellectual curiosity. Yet at the age Brendel was, Goode was still unsure about a commitment to push himself as far as he could as a solo artist. He had established himself as a chamber musician in his native New York but to leave the relative security of chamber music? He was not short of encouragement to do so. Rudolf Serkin had spotted his gifts early on and invited him to the Marlboro Music School and Festival (where Goode is now co-artistic director) when he was still in his teens. Goode describes the Marlboro experience as perhaps the most important part of his musical education. Serkin, devoted to chamber music and one of America's foremost pianists, continued to be an overseeing presence. He could inspire but he was someone to be in awe of, and Goode remembers how he made you aware of just how rigorous and demanding music was: 'Playing well and doing the best you could, really trying to find the truth in music, was the most important thing.' You had a long way to fall. Discovering what's in a text isn't an uncomplicated notion, for a start, and not surprisingly it took time for Goode to find his path and to learn from the force of Serkin's intensity - a characteristic of the great man in everything, but a danger for the pupil in that it could lead to a distortion of one's own impulses. 'They were the most intense lessons I'd ever had with anyone,' Goode has recalled. He warmly acknowledges, too, the counterinfluence he found in the teaching of Mieczysław Horszowski, from whom one 'learned a lot about the way the music was composed'.

Fast forward now to the 1987-88 season in New York and to an acclaimed Beethoven sonata cycle at the hall known as 92nd Street Y. This led to a recital at Carnegie Hall – Goode's first, at the age of 47 – and to recordings of the sonatas brokered by Elektra Nonesuch and Book-of-the-Month Club. Enter *Gramophone* readers! When the set appeared in the UK in 1994 it was adopted as a recommended recording

by *Gramophone* and has sat comfortably alongside the best ever since. Goode has stayed faithful to Nonesuch, with records that are collectable for their look as well as recommendable for the quality within.

He will be 69 this year and one hopes for many more recordings, but the harvest is already rich and consistent. There have been six Mozart concertos with the conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the C minor K491 demands mention: there is no better version in the catalogue. A set of the five Beethoven concertos with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Iván Fischer has also been widely recognised as without peer if you insist on a truly collaborative venture in these great pieces. Then there have been Mozart and Chopin solo recitals, the Chopin perplexing those who like Goode in Beethoven but maintain that first-class Beethoven and first-class Chopin can't exist in one skin. But, as Goode said to me, what 19th-century composer matches Beethoven's tragic heroism better than Chopin?

Yet for a one-pick choice I'm making it his Bach Partitas. He has done as much as any important pianist to reclaim Bach for the piano, admitting to an anti-stylistic prejudice ('it's imprisoning') and believing that when you look at Bach through the sound, the instruments are left behind: 'Your ear is giving you an opening – to find something fitting in your quest for expressiveness on whatever you have at your disposal.'

We have had to wait for this bounty but, as the clarinettist Richard Stoltzman said: 'Can you imagine Richard if he had become a well-known soloist at 25? He would have missed the depth and breadth of intensive meditation on music which only time has made possible. His concentration is what separates him from most musicians.' •

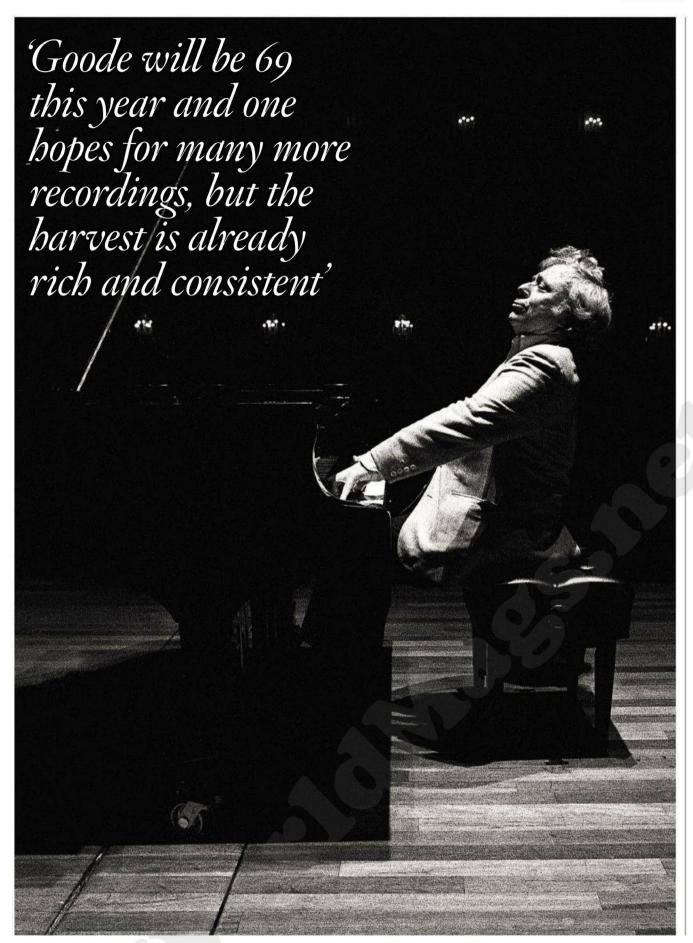
THE ESSENTIAL RECORDING



Bach Partitas Nos 1, 3 & 6 **Richard Goode** *pf* Nonesuch (F) 7559-79698-2 (7/03)

DEFINING MOMENTS

- 1987/88 Beethoven sonatas in New York
 Gives his first Beethoven sonata cycle in New York
 at 92nd Street Y, later recorded in the studio by
 Nonesuch the first Beethoven cycle recording
 by an American-born artist
- 1999 Marlboro Music artistic directorship
 In succession to Rudolf Serkin, Richard Goode and Mitsuko Uchida are appointed joint artistic directors of the Marlboro Music Festival and School in Vermont
- 2005 Beethoven/Budapest FO recording Records the five Beethoven concertos in Budapest with Iván Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra





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Rachmaninov's Paganini Rhapsody

Geoffrey Norris talks to Yevgeny Sudbin about memory, reflexes and fingering

eafing through Yevgeny Sudbin's score of Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, the first thing you notice is that a good many bars are heavily ringed in black pencil and that the piano part is awash with details of fingering. 'Fingering is the first thing I do,' says Sudbin. 'It's really tedious, but very important, and I was happy to discover that Rachmaninov did the same.' Sudbin and I have discussed Rachmaninov many times before, and, as always, he conveys his ideas with animation and insight, speaking eloquently idiomatic English with an attractive Russian inflection. 'When Rachmaninov had worked out the fingering, he'd say that half the job of learning was done,' he continues. 'If you learn a fingering that is not the most comfortable, it's difficult to unlearn. I remember it was a problem with the Second Sonata.' On his 2005 recording (BIS-SACD1518) Sudbin used his own hybrid of Rachmaninov's first and second versions of the sonata. 'I first learnt it in the revised version,' he recalls, 'but then I did the combination, and a lot of things had to be changed. In concerts sometimes the reflexes were still for the revised version. Sometimes it's easier to learn a new piece than to undo a fingering. I prefer to get it out of the way first,' Sudbin says, with a laugh that suggests it's just one of those tasks that has to be ticked off the 'to-do' list.

As we sit across the table in Wigmore Hall's bistro, another passage catches my eye, in the previous variation, No 14. A dozen or so bars of energetic chords in the piano part are marked to be played *ad libitum*. 'A lot of pianists like to play them to warm up for the 15th Variation because it's so tricky,' says Sudbin. 'Rachmaninov quite often does that before a difficult passage, and pianists are grateful. Even at the beginning of the Second Concerto he gives you

'Working out the fingerings is tedious but very important, and I was happy to discover that Rachmaninov did the same'

two minutes to get going. Some composers are considerate like that.' But Rachmaninov does pose all sorts of other challenges in the *Paganini Rhapsody*, not least some tongue-twisting rhythmic conundrums and a good few taxing moments of coordination between piano and orchestra. Sudbin points to the Ninth Variation, where the piano is consistently on the off-beat while strings and woodwind are playing fast triplet chords with the third beat missing.



Cool authority: Sudbin reins back the emotions in Rachmaninov's Rhapsody

The syncopation is cunning but hazardous. 'If you arrive at the Ninth Variation at too slow a speed, it's actually very difficult to keep it together,' says Sudbin. 'I think the first two bars determine whether the rest of the variation will be together, because once you've started you can't possibly listen to every orchestral downbeat, particularly when the piano gets louder.'

The famous 18th Variation, the melodic fulcrum of the whole piece, throws up another problem. 'It's so beautiful that it's easy to indulge it,' says Sudbin, 'but it's actually much more effective if it's played with cool authority and without too much emotion. What I love about Rachmaninov's own playing is that it's so organic, never sentimental, never bringing out a voice simply for the sake of it. If you start pulling the music around it really doesn't sound good. I have taught this piece and I often find that what happens is that it sounds too Romantic. And I don't see it that way. To me it feels like a very modern piece, because you've got a lot of edginess, sharp accents, changes from *pianissimo* to sudden *forte*. The whole piece never ceases to surprise you, even if you've heard it many times.'





Sergei Rachmaninov letter (September 8, 1934)

Two weeks ago I finished the *Rhapsody*. The thing is rather long, 20-25 minutes, ie the scale of a piano concerto... It's rather difficult. I must start learning it, but every year I get lazier about working with the fingers. I try to get away with some old piece that sits under the fingers already.'

Vladimir Horowitz David Dubal: Evenings with Horowitz (1991)

To read Gramophone's review, turn to page 82

I remember when we were in Switzerland, during one summer when Rachmaninov was composing the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, a terrific piece.

A little more modern-sounding, difficult, too, but not so many notes as the Third Concerto. Rachmaninov played it the best.'

Sviatoslav Richter Notebooks and Conversations (2001)

I really enjoyed listening to the *Rhapsody*... but I've no desire to play this piece, in spite of its marvellous qualities: if you restrict yourself to the theme, Brahms is better in a different way; and as for the final bars, I think they're a veritable insult to the work.'



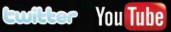




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HERBERT VON KARAJAN

(1908-89) Conductor

One of the best-selling conductors of the 20th century. Associated with the Philharmonia Orchestra (1947-55), principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic (1955-89), general director of the Vienna State Opera (1957-64), musical adviser of the Orchestre de Paris (1969-71). Recorded for EMI and DG.

BY MARISS JANSONS

I first heard Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic in 1969 and at the same time joined a masterclass he gave in St Petersburg. Later I studied with him in Salzburg, working with him from 9 in the morning until 11 at night. It was a wonderful education and enormously inspiring because, being close to such a personality, you see every small nuance of what he's doing. When he liked somebody and believed in his talent – whether it was a conductor or a singer or a soloist – he was very supportive.

Karajan was a unique conductor. I can't think of another who had such a broad repertoire. He conducted practically everything, and always at a very high level – and he had a great ensemble of musicians in the Berlin Philharmonic. It's really unique when somebody can do everything so fantastically. You expected great things from his Brahms, Richard Strauss, Wagner, Verdi, but he

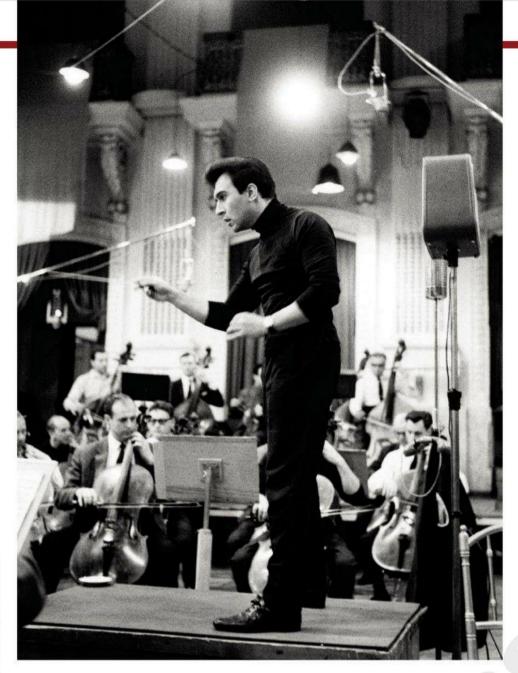
did Stravinsky beautifully: his Sacre du printemps was unbelievable! He was really great in opera and this is why he started to make his own productions as producer. I always say he was like a bird who is flying over the world: as he flies he has a much wider perspective than those of us on earth – and that's how it was with Karajan for me. He was a man with worldwide ideas and possibilities and talent. Everything he did was really very international and at a very high level.

He made conducting not *popular* but a very *known* profession. You could stop someone on the street and they would recognise Karajan even if they didn't have any clue about music. Karajan was a kind of symbol of what it was to be a conductor. In all of history, he was one of the most important conductors, and one of the most wonderful. People like that don't come along very often: they are very special cases.









CLAUDIO ABBADO

(b1933) Conductor

Born in Milan, Abbado made his La Scala debut in 1960 and was the house's music director from 1971 to 1986. He headed the Vienna State Opera (1986-91), LSO (1979-87) and BPO (1990-2002).

BY DOUGLAS BOYD

I think that what makes Claudio a great artist is his humanity, his extraordinary ability to change the sounds of the orchestra just with a gesture, and an incredible focus on the concert. In other words, the rehearsal is just a process and everything – all the energy – goes into the concert itself.

At their best, his performances can be life-changing. In addition, he's always got the big picture in view – the large concept and landscape of a piece – in a way that is quite unique to him. In my youth orchestra days,

Mahler symphonies with him were quite extraordinary. But I think that another important aspect about Claudio in terms of repertoire is that he continues to grow and develop, which is the sign of a great artist.

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If you listen, for example, to his Beethoven and Mozart recordings today compared to his Beethoven and Mozart of 30 years ago, there is an unbelievable transformation and a continuing growth, which comes through a mix of his fascination with performance practices that have emerged in the past 30 years and his own fantasy and imagination.

own fantasy and imagination.

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

(1886-1954) Conductor

One of the conducting giants of the 20th century, Furtwängler was also a composer. His lifelong devotion to Beethoven resulted in a series of legendary recordings. He worked with a number of German orchestras before heading the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (1922-28) and the BPO (1922-45, and 1952-54).

BY CHRISTIAN THIELEMANN

For me, Wilhelm Furtwängler is a phenomenon. The way he combined a distinct sense for sound with a flexibility in tempo and an inherent spontaneity in his music-making is unsurpassed. Every one of his performances was different but always revealed a sense for the overall architecture and the build-up of tension. Only the greatest have been able to do that.

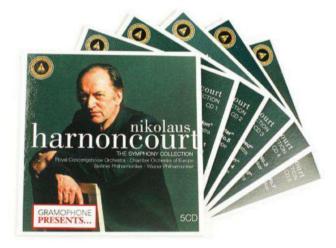


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LEONARD BERNSTEIN

(1918-90) Conductor and pianist

A pupil of Fritz Reiner, Bernstein was music director of the New York Philharmonic and later forged close links with the VPO and LSO. He conducted for Maria Callas at La Scala and recorded extensively: first for CBS (now Sony Classical) and subsequently for DG.

BY MARIN ALSOP

Leonard Bernstein's contribution to music in the 20th century was immense, whether as composer, conductor, pianist or teacher, and it's hard to think of another human so prodigiously talented. He threw himself into every piece as if his life depended on it, and never stopped searching and plumbing the depths of a work or a composer. Giving every human being equal access to great music is the conductor's ultimate responsibility, and Bernstein's Young People's Concerts infected me with the passion to become a conductor, while his mentorship at Tanglewood inspired, buoyed and helped me through many difficult times on my way. As a composer, he brought joy to audiences from Broadway to Carnegie Hall, with music infused by his huge generosity of spirit, and in Mass - for me, his masterpiece - the diversity and fundamental embrace that summarised his world view were crystallised into a single work. His genuine enthusiasm and obvious deep love for music made numerous converts, and he touched tens of thousands of lives.

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CARLOS KLEIBER

(1930-2004) Conductor Son of conductor Erich Kleiber, Carlos was renowned for the rarity of his performances and his superb musicianship.

BY CLEMENS HELLSBERG

What was it that propelled Carlos Kleiber to near mystical heights? It was the unforgettable experience of surpassing one's own boundaries, yet also the utter helplessness when he stormed off in the last minutes of a final rehearsal. This was not pretension, but rather the expression of deepest despair, even though the orchestra had performed at the highest level – or perhaps for that very reason.

Extreme contradictions characterised his personality: one constantly feared catastrophe, yet he was always available to musicians for private conversations. He had a vast repertoire, yet restricted himself to a very few works. His outbursts of rage could be directed at anyone, yet his interaction with children was characterised by a precious and fragile tenderness.

In art there are no upward limits. Yet each generation needs at least one artist who exemplifies this. Kleiber reached to the stars for us; even when he broke down in his efforts, he still proved that they exist.

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JASCHA HEIFETZ

(1901-87) Violinist

When Russian-born Heifetz made his US debut in 1917, it was a red-letter day. He remained in the States and, with his technique, intense vibrato and characteristic portamento, assumed the role, for many, of the greatest violinist.

BY ITZHAK PERLMAN

Probably the most revolutionary violinist of the 20th century, Jascha Heifetz brought new levels of technique and perfection to the instrument. I feel that nobody brought fiddle-playing into the modern era more successfully and dramatically than Heifetz. This level has never been surpassed, and probably never will be. Combined with a unique, individual style of music-making, it makes Jascha Heifetz the most important violinist of modern times.

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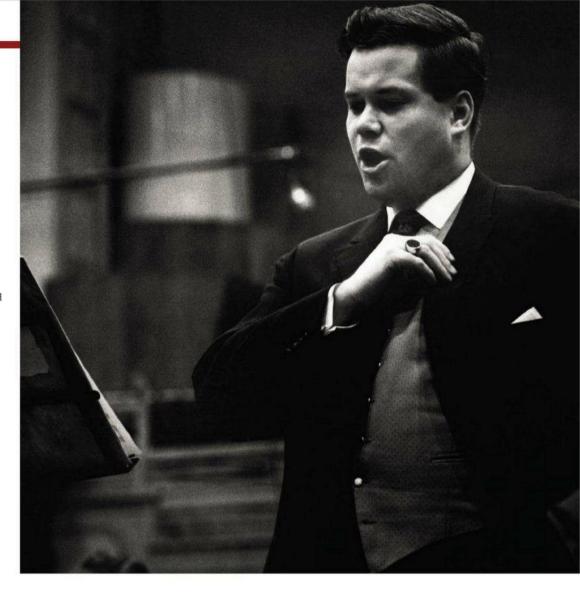
DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU

(b1925) Baritone and conductor Fischer-Dieskau emerged as a performer following the Second World War, and developed a style of interpretation which established a new approach to song.

BY THOMAS HAMPSON

Few artists achieve the level of recognition, admiration and influence of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and even fewer live to see that influence realised during their own lifetime. Ushering in the modern recording era, he challenged our perceptions and processes of how recordings could be made, explored the possibilities of modern recording and exploited the potential for popularity of classical music; and all this while setting standards of artistic achievement, integrity, risk-taking, and the aesthetic ideal that became our new norm. Whether we bask in the beauty of his tone, revere the probing, questioning power of his intellect, or simply wonder at the astonishing physical abilities through all that he has achieved in his long recording career, we must also pause and say 'Thank you' to this great artist, whose legacy, like a great and bright star lighting the way for those who follow in his passion for singing, is exemplary in every way.

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SIR SIMON RATTLE

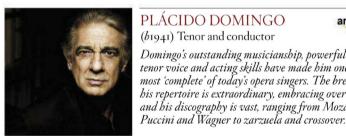
(b1955) Conductor

Liverpool-born Rattle made his name during his long tenure at the helm of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. In 2002, he succeeded Claudio Abbado as principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic.

BY THOMAS ADÈS

Sir Simon Rattle is as brilliant and devoted an interpreter as any composer could wish to find. He has the rare quality of bringing out the best in everyone. His advocacy, passion and precision have greatly supported me as a composer and taken the two works I have so far written for him round the world. In Birmingham, he built an electrifying scene and a great concert hall; in Berlin he has continued to go from strength to strength, always doing things his own way.

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PLÁCIDO DOMINGO

(b1941) Tenor and conductor

Domingo's outstanding musicianship, powerful dramatic tenor voice and acting skills have made him one of the most 'complete' of today's opera singers. The breadth of his repertoire is extraordinary, embracing over 130 roles, and his discography is vast, ranging from Mozart, Verdi,

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BY SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO

Plácido is the embodiment of the complete musical and theatrical artist. He has continually reinvented himself, striving to forge a relationship with all kinds of music, and through his inimitable voice, force of personality and charisma, he has won over millions of followers for himself and classical music in general. Bravo!

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ALFRED BRENDEL

(b1931) Pianist

One of the great interpreters of the core Austro-German repertoire, Brendel's career ran from 1948 to 2008 when he retired from concert-giving.

BY IMOGEN COOPER

Brendel has always stood alone in what he does. He was a very individual voice when I first met him more than 40 years ago - his concert life was on an upswing as he reached 40, but he had a large body of recordings already behind him that were evidence of a wide range of repertoire, delivered with insight and energy, and fuelled in their integrity by active interest in the visual arts, literature and humour. Interestingly, some of the composers for whom he is now renowned and remembered were - I think he would agree - still works in progress, whereas others (Stravinsky, Balakirev and Mussorgsky) were dropped. But the core of great repertoire that remained deepened and flowered - how unforgettable his Beethoven sonata cycles, his revelation of Liszt, both in terms of introducing us to unfamiliar pieces and in the noble and visionary way he played them. How unforgettable also his (and sometimes our) discovery of the great Haydn works, and his profound Schubert, which was a luminous reference point for so many of us. We should be grateful to be living in an era when it was possible to share and be enriched by this journey.



MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH

(1927-2007) Cellist and conductor

One of the great cellists of recent years, Rostropovich inspired or commissioned over 100 works. He left the USSR in 1974 and remained a staunch critic of the regime.

BY STEVEN ISSERLIS

There are very few musical performers who have earned the same sort of immortality as the great composers. One of these few is Mstislav Rostropovich, the great Russian cellist who, through his amazing playing and his irresistible powers of persuasion, managed to wring out major works for cello from an almost endless succession of major composers, from Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Britten to Dutilleux, Lutosławski, Boris Tchaikovsky, Schnittke, Shchedrin...

Slava was a unique, irreplaceable personality; he seemed to epitomise the word 'charisma'. I remember one of the first times I heard him live (I must have been about 11), at the premiere of the Lutosławski Concerto. Slava came on stage looking as if he'd never heard applause before, bowing over and over again with an expression of utter delight suffusing his features; the audience was in his spell within seconds. Then he sat down, his chin jutted out alarmingly, and he launched into the concerto - from memory, of course - with such total conviction and power that by the end of the performance, everyone present knew that the concerto was now part of the cello repertoire. What a magician!

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WALTER LEGGE

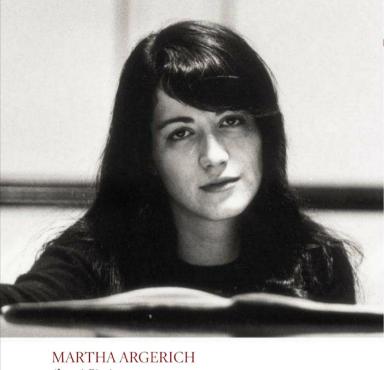
(1906-79) Producer

Legge joined HMV in 1927 and was soon working as a producer. He founded the Philharmonia in 1945. Many of the recordings he produced became immediate classics.

BY ANDREW KEENER

A few years ago, EMI issued 'The Art of Walter Legge'. Musicians under 30 who are not keen record collectors may have assumed that here perhaps was a veteran conductor, instrumentalist or singer. It may be news to them that Legge was one of the first 'interventionist' recording producers, imposing musical guidance, even an interpretative viewpoint (sometimes resisted!) in the studio. Legge believed in recording as an art form in itself, intending music-making that would bear repetition, interpretations that represented, without distraction or compromise, what an artist had to say about a piece of music. He and his contemporary colleagues paved the way for the next two generations of producers, including myself. Like him, we are vicarious musicians, in love with music, and endlessly fascinated by the musicianship and company of performers.

gramophone.co.uk/halloffame GRAMOPHONE MAY 2012 31



(b1941) Pianist

A win in the International Chopin Piano Competition in 1965, aged 24, put Argerich on the musical map. She has recorded extensively throughout her career, though since the mid-1980s she has given few solo performances.

BY MISCHA MAISKY

As far as I am concerned, Martha Argerich is not just one of the greatest pianists, or just 'of our time'. She's one of the greatest musicians – period. Of course, I'm not objective...but why should I be? Martha has been one of my closest friends for 37 years.

I've been lucky to work with many great musicians, but still Martha has a very special place in my life. Whenever people ask me about her I always say that, for me, Martha is like life itself: it's not easy, it can be very unpredictable, it can be a pain in the neck, but it's the most beautiful and wonderful thing there is – because she has this rather unique combination of qualities. She is a phenomenally gifted pianist (she doesn't have any limitations technically and musically), but she's also an incredibly intuitive musician, yet at the same time – which not too many people realise – she has a very strong intellectual approach to music-making.

Not only that, she is incredibly humble. Much too humble as far as I'm concerned! She's very human and suffers from insecurities, but she is the most gifted, charming and incredible person and musician that I have ever had the pleasure and privilege to play music with.

ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN

(1887-1982) Pianist

Polish-born Rubinstein was celebrated as one of the greatest Chopin pianists ever, but his repertoire was much broader. He preferred studio recording and left a substantial legacy, mainly for RCA.

BY JANINA FIALKOWSKA

When Arthur Rubinstein walked on stage, we, the audience, felt instantly enveloped by a golden aura, a feeling of positive humanity and goodwill that he carried around with him wherever he went. He was the consummate communicator who understood and revered what was in the composers' minds and hearts, and transmitted the beauty and emotion of their creations directly to his public; from heart, to heart. We would be transported on to a higher plane and we left his concerts as better and happier human beings.

DAME JOAN SUTHERLAND

(1926-2010) Soprano

Sutherland made a colossal contribution to the revival of the bel canto repertoire—invariably with her husband Richard Bonynge conducting.

BY MARILYN HORNE

Ioan and I first met at a rehearsal for Bellini's Beatrice di Tenda. It was her New York debut, and to say that it was eagerly awaited is a major understatement. I was excited beyond words because she was the singer at that time - 1961 - who everyone was talking about. And who could have known that I was going to be lucky enough to be in on the ground floor of her bel canto revolution? She was a musical comet to which I, then an unknown nova, attached myself. It was destiny, pure and simple. How lucky can you get? I believe that, 50 years from now, people who never heard Joan on the stage will get the message from her recordings, which are very faithful, I think they really convey that beauty of sound, sense of security and the excitement of hearing her.



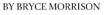


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SVIATOSLAV RICHTER

(1915-97) Pianist

One of the greatest pianists of all time, the Russian Richter was admired equally by his peers, the public and the critics. His repertoire was wide, his technique astounding.



Sviatoslav Richter's name appears at the head of virtually everyone's short list of great pianists. His all-encompassing repertoire ranged from Bach to Webern, and early acclaim came from Julius Katchen, Emil Gilels and Lazar Berman who spoke of a musical nonpareil, causing expectations to pulse at fever pitch at his London and New York recitals given in the 1960s. Provocatively measured in Schubert, a magical dreamer in

Schumann, heaven-storming in the Russian Romantics and showing an uncanny empathy in Debussy, Richter nonetheless relished criticism, notably from Fischer-Dieskau and Annie Fischer. Later, Bruno Monsaingeon's masterly film, *Richter – the Enigma*, showed a complex man who disliked both his own playing and personality. Richter left a vast legacy of recordings, the majority of which testify to a supreme genius.



PHOTOGRAPHY. DERICH AUERBACH/GETTY IMAGES. S.LAUTERWASSER/LEBRECH AF ARCHIVE / ALMMY. RON SCHERL/REDFERNS, DECCA/LEBRECHT MUSIC & ARTS

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SIR GEORG SOLTI

(1912-97) Conductor

A pupil of Bartók, Weiner and Dohnányi in Budapest, Solti led the opera in Frankfurt before taking over at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. In 1969, he became music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a post be held for 22 years. He recorded exclusively for Decca, leaving a vast legacy of symphonic, choral and operatic discs.

BY JEAN-EFFLAM BAVOUZET

The more I grow in my life as musician, the more the example of Sir Georg shines in my private pantheon. With his always-ongoing energy, insatiable curiosity and desire to meet and help the younger generation, he showed us how a career should be built progressively and organically in order to achieve one's own artistic goal. I feel extremely fortunate to have had the chance to meet Sir Georg in the last three years of his life when he was extremely generous to share with me his extremely precise and powerful musical ideas.

He also gave me the best advice: 'Never give up, keep working, there is always room at the top!'

JOHN CULSHAW

(1924-80) Producer

For Decca, Culshaw's key recordings include Britten's War Requiem and many of the composer's operas, plus the Ring cycle conducted by Solti.

BY MICHAEL HAAS

Today, we rarely realise how diverse the concept of 'good' recorded sound used to be. That the 'Decca Sound' — with its mix of natural ambient acoustic and musical signal, recorded using microphones perched in the 'Decca Tree' above the conductor's head — would become the gold standard of recorded sound by the mid-1990s is thanks to Decca's team of unsurpassed audio engineers. However, it was in the exploitation of the three-dimensional qualities of this sound while recording opera in the studio that would ultimately become John Culshaw's legacy. Every producer relies on his engineer and Culshaw could always rely on Gordon Parry to find solutions for every dramatic event in an opera's narrative. Culshaw brought opera into the studio in order to make it sound even more 'live' than had it been recorded in the theatre. Some achievement — some legacy!



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DAVID OISTRAKH

(1908-74) Violinist

A child prodigy, the Russian David Oistrakh's rock-solid technique, impeccable intonation and distinguished musicianship won him a huge following.

BY DANIEL HOPE

Jascha Heifetz was sometimes referred to as 'The King', but it was Henryk Szeryng who called Oistrakh 'The Emperor'. Of all the great violinists of the 20th century who have inspired me, Oistrakh is the one who changed the way I heard and saw violinists forever. An effortless and majestic violinist with a golden, noble tone, his musicality enveloped thousands while his vision dominated decades of Soviet composers and his many students alike. Menuhin once told me that Oistrakh was 'the ultimate colleague', which I think speaks volumes about this great musician. His mixture of great humility and gentle humour, combined with dazzling playing which was never virtuosic for its own sake, remains a true inspiration to us all.





GLENN GOULD

(1932-82) Pianist

Appreciated by an audience far wider than the average 'classical music lover' for his Bach discs, Glenn Gould assumed an iconic status during his life. Eccentric and opinionated, Gould abandoned concert-giving aged 31 to focus on studio recording.

BY JED DISTLER

Glenn Gould threw received notions of piano interpretation and core repertoire out the window, while his unique hair-trigger articulation, particular sonority (two notes and you know it's Gould), rhythmic focus and X-ray-like contrapuntal clarity left music lovers mesmerised and his baffled colleagues awestruck. His recordings and television performances alternate between revelatory and infuriating, yet they consistently entertain and beckon your attention.



VLADIMIR HOROWITZ

(1903-89) Pianist

Born in Russia, Horowitz emigrated in 1925 and in 1939 made his home in New York. His technical flair won him a huge following and his concerts sold out within hours. He recorded for RCA, CBS and, finally, for DG.

BY JEREMY NICHOLAS

No pianist of the past century captured the public imagination in quite the same way as Horowitz. For more than 50 years, few equalled him in speed, sonority, power and pure edge-of-the-seat excitement. Though illness frequently interrupted his career, rarity value and canny marketing also contributed to his legendary status. 'Horowitzian' became a much-used, instantly understood adjective. He became the yardstick for unbridled virtuosity, especially in Romantic repertoire, with a unique colouristic imagination and an immediately recognisable tonal palette. He championed the little-known works of Scarlatti, Clementi, Scriabin and Medtner and was generally considered to be the nonpareil in Liszt and Rachmaninov. He had few pupils, but it was his influence on countless pianists who only knew him from gramophone recordings that was his lasting legacy.



ARTURO TOSCANINI

(1867-1957) Conductor From his debut at the age of 19 conducting Aida, his career never faltered. He led the premieres of La bohème and Pagliacci, and later headed La Scala (1921-29).

BY ROB COWAN

Mahler's adage that 'tradition is the memory of the last bad performance' could as easily have been Arturo Toscanini's artistic credo. The man widely known as 'The Maestro' was a sworn enemy of interpretative excess, meaning the wilful distortion of text, tempo or texture in the interests of 'subjective' expression. Toscanini's style was lean, dramatic, honest (sometimes austerely so) and scrupulously faithful to the spirit and often the letter - of the score to hand. His Beethoven had heroic backbone; his Wagner, passion, pace and virility; his Verdi, dignity, warmth and a vivid sense of theatre. Not for him self-regarding divas disrupting the operatic flow with unwarranted encores (he expressly forbade such crass indulgencies), or the cult of personality. Toscanini was an electrifying rostrum presence but humility was always at the hub of his art.



DENNIS BRAIN

(1921-57) Horn player Brain was principal horn in both the RPO and the Philharmonia, the latter with whom he made a disc of the Mozart horn concertos. He died in a car accident aged 36.

BY DAVID PYATT

Dennis Brain's legacy is unique in the annals of horn playing. He was the first horn player who convinced audiences, conductors, composers and recording producers that they needn't run for cover when the horns start playing! His accuracy was legendary, as was his tone. He also had a huge impact on the repertoire being written for the instrument. Without him, there would be no Britten Serenade, Arnold or Jacob concertos or the myriad chamber and solo music written for him and his quintet. It is easy now to relegate Brain to the dusty corridors of history, especially as we are in an age where the technical mastery of the horn has never been more complete. However, what he brought to the table was impeccable taste and manners, allied with a fluidity and ease of playing which defines the British school of horn-playing to the present day.

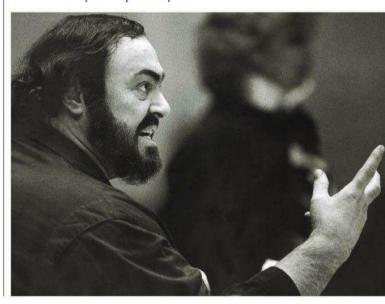
LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

(1935-2007) Tenor

One of The Three Tenors (with Domingo and Carreras), Pavarotti developed a vast international following. His career began in 1961 and very soon he was fêted in the great opera houses of the world where he often sang (and also recorded) with Dame Joan Sutherland.

BY MIRELLA FRENI

Apart from family, the person I knew longest was Luciano. As teenagers in Modena, we grew up as constant companions, sharing a great passion and respect for the human voice. Luciano did everything con abbondanza and his charisma endeared him to one and all. One can hear this in his music-making – be it in a Donizetti comedy like La fille du régiment; a noble Verdian work such as Un ballo in maschera; or in Puccini's La bohème, which became our 'calling card'. With all his fame, Luciano never lost sight of what truly mattered in life – family, friends, loyalty and his beloved Modena – and this comes through in his singing. Luciano's voice embodied the sunshine and passion of Italy. One cannot fail to recognise that glorious sound nor be moved by its unique beauty.





OTTO KLEMPERER

(1885-1973) Conductor

Despite a successful early career, Klemperer's reputation was made during the 1950s and 1960s, recording with the Philharmonia for EMI.

BY PETER QUANTRILL

'To create is to put in order. Put what in order? Function and objects.' Le Corbusier was speaking of buildings, but Otto Klemperer was an architect of music. Another doyen of Bauhaus design, Mies van der Rohe talked of 'skin and bones' architecture. Listen to Klemperer's recording of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony and you hear, no, you sense the organism of the composer's invention, in all its parts. That he also knew his Bach inside out and grasped the new structures of Boulez and Stockhausen is crucial to such understanding. He was a complete musician worthy of any accolade posterity cares to award.

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SIR JOHN ELIOT GARDINER

(b1943) Conductor

A great advocate of period performance; he has received more Gramophone Awards than any other living artist.

BY ROBERT LEVIN

Sir John Eliot Gardiner has brought deep insight, vitality, flair and visionary commitment to an impressively broad range of repertoire. Working with him is a privilege and a delight, in which aspiration to the highest level of drama and emotional communication is at the forefront. Whether at the helm of his own Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists or the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, or on the podium with leading opera companies and symphony orchestras around the world, his advocacy fuses intellectual rigour and incandescent imagination.



JUSSI BJÖRLING

(1911-60) Tenor

He made his operatic debut in 1930 and within a decade was performing at the Met. One of the loveliest of tenor voices, he recorded for RCA and EMI.

BY JOSEPH CALLEJA

When anyone asks me to give an example of a perfectly controlled tenor voice I always mention Luciano Pavarotti and Jussi Björling. It is not a surprise that Pavarotti himself wrote that he modelled his career on the great Swedish tenor.

Numerous recordings and live testimony seem to agree that his basic sound was sweet but at the same time full, with a sort of constant 'tear' in the sound. There has always been some controversy as to exactly how big the voice sounded in the theatre, but critics from the time all seemed to agree that his voice had a 'laser-beam quality' that allowed him to cut through even the most dense of orchestras.

Björling has frequently been voted 'the world's greatest tenor' and Dorothy Caruso has gone on record to say that he was the only singer that reminded her of the great Enrico Caruso in live performance.



DAME JANET BAKER

(b1933) Mezzo-soprano

A great English singer who excelled in opera, song and oratorio. She worked closely with Barbirolli and Britten (who wrote Phaedra for her).

BY CHRISTIANNE STOTIJN

Dame Janet Baker has confronted me with the deepest responsibility one has as a performing musician. Each time I have been privileged enough to meet her, she has inspired me to work from purity and honesty towards the music and meaning of a composer's wishes.

Singing for me has become more and more religious, developing a sense of ritual by focusing in the utmost concentration on the music only. Dame Janet has become an inner voice, helping and motivating me every day to never stop searching for the meaning and truth in everything I do, sing, or say.



PABLO CASALS

(1876-1973) Cellist and conductor The man who arguably put the cello on the musical map in the 20th century. He rescued the Bach Cello Suites and his premiere recording remains a classic.

BY ALBAN GERHARDT

A child learns how to speak by imitating its parents' voices. I found my musical voice after a long voyage at which beginning stood the great Catalan cellist Pablo Casals. He was my first idol. I bought every single LP I could get my hands on and for the longest time I wanted to sound like him. I loved his intensity, articulation, the 'interpretative' intonation – even the grunting I adored. For me, cello-playing was only a substitution for not being able to sing as beautifully as my mother could, so it made sense to take Casals as a role model. For him, 'singing' was not only producing a nice sound (which he did), but also making the music 'speak'.

He was a unique and complete musician. By discovering the beauty of Bach's Cello Suites, he established them as a bible for all cellists, and his recordings of them are still an inspiration.

YEHUDI MENUHIN

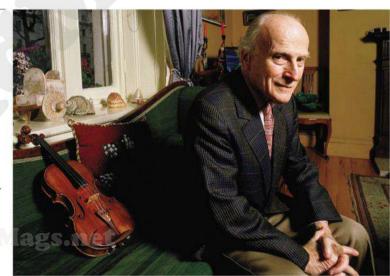
(1916-99) Violinist and conductor

A child prodigy who recorded Elgar's Violin Concerto as a 16-year-old, Menuhin became one of the 20th century's finest and best-loved musicians.

BY NIGEL KENNEDY

Yehudi's beliefs and disciplines were largely influenced by his father, Moshe, and the results of that influence were felt across all aspects of his life, from his profoundly philosophical musicianship (rather than a mere technical mastery), to his post-war conciliation with the German people.

Yehudi recognised that the music of the great German and Austrian masters was the foundation of all further developments in classical music. This recognition is missing from many performers of subsequent generations and makes Yehudi's legacy even more crucial. His open attitude to other forms of music and his lack of shyness towards the media have left an everlasting impression on my own life.





ENRICO CARUSO

(1873-1921) Tenor

One of the first stars of the gramophone age, Caruso made more than 290 recordings in the first two decades of the 20th century. He appeared at the Met over 860 times. His disc of 'Vesti la giubba' sold over one million copies.

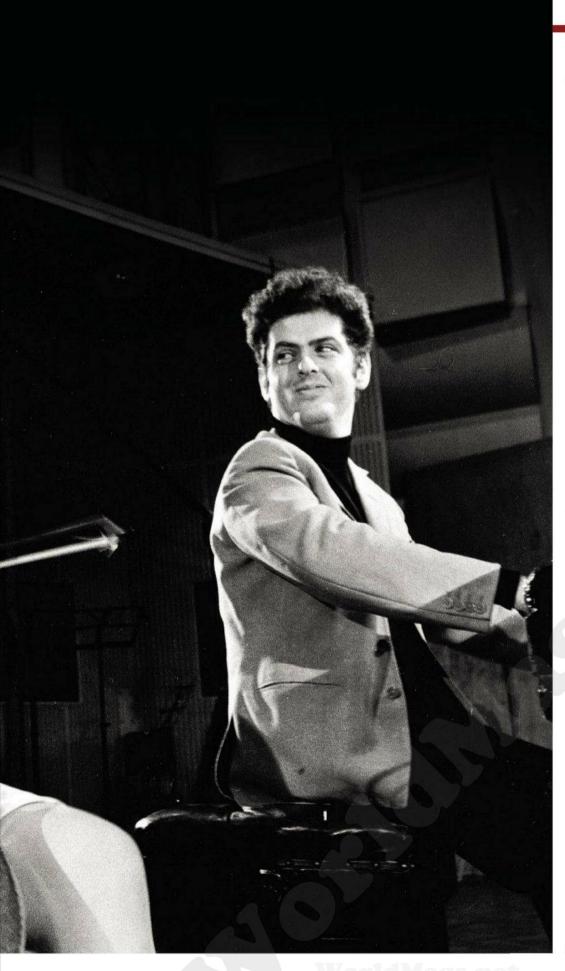
BY MIKE ASHMAN

The voice was low, dark and so baritonal that early record buyers wondered at first whether he really was a tenor. But there was also stunning attack on middle and top notes. As in the worlds of science and sports, a path-breaking invention often seems to throw up immediately the people and the media capable of exploiting that new invention to the fullest. So it seems that the 78rpm record, producer Fred Gaisberg, the four-minute verismo aria and the singer Enrico Caruso were all born at the same moment. Also, unlike many of his contemporaries who were intent only on preserving a perfect facsimile of their techniques, Caruso - whose voice the microphone loved as much as a camera loves a photogenic face - really performed and acted out his roles on record.



PHOTOGRAPHY: AF ARCHIVE/ALAMY, REG WILSON/EMI CLASSICS





JACQUELINE DU PRÉ (1945-87) Cellist

Du Pré studied cello with Tortelier and Rostropovich. She married Daniel Barenboim in 1967. Her most celebrated disc is of the Elgar Cello Concerto, a work she made her own. She died, aged 42, of multiple sclerosis.

BY NATALIE CLEIN

When I think of Jacqueline du Pré, I think of a performer who thrived on stage, and of a musical spirit who swept up all around her in her enthusiasm and love of her art. It was a gift for me as a young cellist to have such a strong female player as an idol and I certainly found her a great source of inspiration throughout my early cello years. When I was about 12 years old I was given a book about the great cellists of the 20th century, and I used to read over and over again the passage about her, at about the same age as I was, rushing towards the stage, raring to play. I loved that image of her - fearless and joyful - and I immediately understood that that must be the ideal state for all performers to aspire to. I still believe that now. I believe it was her generosity of spirit and ability to transcend the small worries of everyday performing that made her so great.

DANIEL BARENBOIM

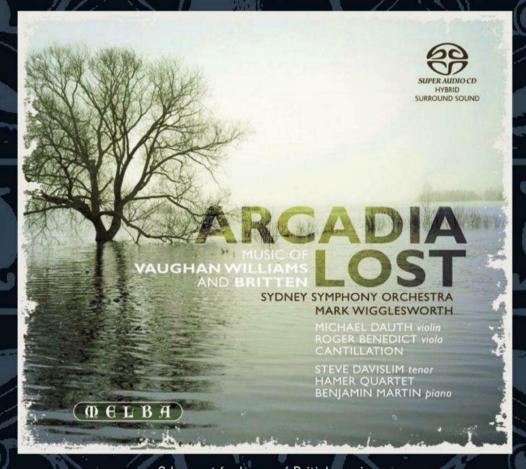
(b1942) Pianist and conductor In his early 20s, he recorded all the Beethoven piano sonatas and concertos. He took up conducting in 1966 and bas combined a dual career ever since.

BY LANG LANG

I feel very lucky to count Daniel Barenboim not just as a mentor but as a friend. When we can synchronise our schedules I play for him, and the experience and wisdom he offers is invaluable. He's been performing at the highest level for more than 60 years, and he immerses himself in music 24/7. He's not a pianist who conducts, or a conductor who plays the piano: he's a total musician. When he discusses a passage in a Beethoven piano sonata, he brings not only a long and detailed knowledge of that particular work but also the experience of having conducted all the symphonies, Fidelio, the overtures, of having played all 31 other piano sonatas, the violin sonatas, the piano trios, the piano concertos...He is a colossus in the world of music - long may he continue to share his musicianship, courage and deep humanity with us all.

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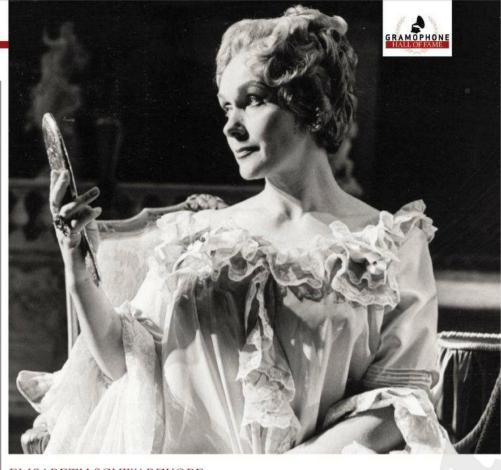
PIERRE BOULEZ

(b1925) Conductor and composer With his meticulous conducting technique and phenomenal ear, Boulez has championed the music of fellow

French composers, and performed a vast repertoire, old and new.

BY PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD

I had the good fortune to programme a Boulez Festival in London last autumn. The great man himself directed his Pli selon Pli. The concert was one of the most uplifting I have ever heard. From this masterpiece, interpreted immaculately, emerged Boulez's superior qualities. His lucidity (the result of paring away t he unnecessary), his craft (which balances great respect for the score with total liberation), his genius for organisation. But, above all, his strangely rarefied originality, his poetic otherness. His conducting, concentrated to its essence, is the personification of economy, and the effacement of ego in the pursuit of his supreme goal: to serve the music. One of his major legacies is to have shown how genius and artistic morality can coexist. That this composer/conductor/thinker has always turned his attention to the music of others - and these days to education reveals a world view where passion and artistic responsibility are interwoven.



ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF

(1915-2006) Soprano

Schwarzkopf and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau spearheaded a new approach to Lieder interpretation, placing great emphasis on the text, balanced with subtle shading. She was part of an unofficial 'company' of singers who recorded in the early years for LP and stereo.

BY JULIUS DRAKE

What I love about her singing is her absolutely fervent intensity, not just in what she does with every word, but how completely involving she is as a musician. She lives the music with total commitment. Apart from having one of the most beautiful soprano voices, she found the colour, felt the words as well as the music. As time went

on she became a little more mannered, but when you hear her in her prime she is simply astonishing.

There is also her dedication to song – it was no holds barred. You feel music and music-making, bringing to life a song, was the most important thing that there could be. One of the things I admire her for, too, is her unwavering dedication to Hugo Wolf, who she was determined to put in his rightful place among the great song composers. I understand that of the 10 recitals she gave in Salzburg before 1964, astonishingly no less than seven of them were given over exclusively to Wolf! What she wanted to do was show the world that he was as great as Schubert and Schumann. That's the sort of dedication I find inspiring.



TAKÁCS QUARTET

(1975-) String quartet

The Takács Quartet are one of the world's great quartets. They have recorded Beethoven and Bartók for Decca and now record for Hyperion.

BY ROSS SNYDER

The Tesla Quartet was in its infancy when we were offered a place on the Takács's graduate quartet programme at the University of Colorado, and we are grateful to have had them as mentors during those formative years. For them, perfection is not the goal, but rather the ability to convey fully the emotional content of the music. I can't recall a coaching session in which we haven't been asked, 'So, what is the character here?'. The importance they place on getting inside the music comes across clearly in performance, and the notes on the page are merely the words they use to express more profound ideas. What sustains their artistic vision is sincerity, generosity of spirit, humour and compassion. These provide a healthy foundation for a sustainable professional career.



MAJOR CONCERTS

ORATORIOS

Musique pour les Fastes Royaux

The Academy of Ancient Music - Richard Egarr - 8 June

Dunedin Consort & Players - John Butt - 20 June

Le Messie

Dunedin Consort & Players - John Butt - 21 June

The Sixteen - Harry Christophers - 24 June

Israel In Egypt

The Sixteen - Harry Christophers - 25 June

Solomon

Gabrielli Consort & Players - Paul Mac Creesh - 26 June

The King's Consort - Robert King - 10, 11 July

OPÉRAS

Orlando

Il Complesso Barocco - Alan Curtis - 11 June

Alcina

Les Talens Lyriques - Christophe Rousset - 12 June

Jules César

Accademia Bizantina - Ottavio Dantone - 14 June

Xerxès

Ensemble Matheus - Jean Christophe Spinosi - Ft July Tamerlano

Les Musiciens du Louvre, Grenoble - Marc Minkowski - 11 July Gluck: Orphée et Eurydice

Ballet National de Marseille - Opéra de Saint Etienne Frédéric Flamand - Giuseppe Graziolli - 24, 25 June

CONCERTS

Cécilia Bartoli : Héroines Haendéliennes

Il Giardino Armonico - Giovanni Antonini - 13 June

Gala des 4 Contre Ténors

Cencic - Wey - Sabata - Yi - Collegium 1704 - Vacklav Luks 19 June

Cécilia Bartoli: Sacrificium

La Scintilla - Ada Pesch - 27 June

Max Emanuel Cencic: Héros Haendeliens Armonia Aténéa - Georges Petrou - 9 July

Royal Fireworks Music - Water Music

Le Concert des Nations - Jordi Savall - 5, 6, 7 July

Water Music - Il Delirio Amoroso

Le Concert d'Astrée - Emmanuelle Haïm - 6 July

L'âge d'Or à Cappella

The Monteverdi Choir - Sir John Eliot Gardiner - 10 June

Les 24 Violons du Roi

Lully, Campra, Marais, Lalande

Académie des 24 Violons du Roi - Patrick Cohen Akenine - 22 June

Alexandre Tharaud

Rameau, Couperin, Ravel - 28 June

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JOYCE DIDONATO

(b1969) Mezzo-soprano

She is a singer who has captured the hearts of audiences around the world. DiDonato's repertoire ranges from the Baroque to music written specially for her.

BY JAKE HEGGIE

The staggering, joyful artistry of Joyce DiDonato reminds us that in any generation there are few giants. Joyce is not only a great, brave and inspiring artist - one of the finest singers of our time - but she is also a transformative presence in the arts. Those who know her repertoire are in awe of her gifts, and those who know nothing of it are instantly dazzled and engaged. Jovce sings and the world is suddenly brighter. She compels us to listen actively, to hear things anew. Every gleaming note and phrase is infused with connection, meaning and an almost unnerving empathy. Joyce delights in possibility and has no wish to play it safe. When I write a song or a role for her, I know she will explore every nuance until it leaps off the page as though it had always existed. It is a sense of wonder she brings to every performance, and to every person lucky enough to call her a friend.



MURRAY PERAHIA

(b1947) Pianist and conductor Perahia shot to fame when he won the Leeds Piano Competition in 1972. He continues to record, and his back-catalogue discs

are regularly cited as benchmarks.

BY MARTIN CULLINGFORD

The repertoire for which Murray Perahia is best known -Bach, Chopin, Mozart, Beethoven usually falls into the areas of the catalogue where lists are longest and competition is most fierce. And yet his are the interpretations refined, intelligent, calm but never cold - I will so invariably reach for. Absences from the keyboard due to a hand injury - two years in one case - were spent not in bitter resentment, but in reflecting on scores, awaiting the return of full health. Remarkable virtuoso command is a given of course. but is only ever employed in the service of the music. The quiet, dignified humility one senses in his interpretations seems entirely at one with the man himself. The other thing one hears is a complete and committed love of music-making. And what more can, or indeed should, one ask of a musician?



SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

(1879-1961) Conductor

Apart from his podium skills Beecham was one of British music's greatest patrons, founding both the RPO and the LPO.

BY EDWARD GARDNER

Despite the brilliance and wit of the anecdotes, I feel a certain sadness that Sir Thomas Beecham is known foremost by the populace for his one-liners rather than for his performances. His ebullient, jovial, 'English Gentleman' public persona belied a musician of rare sensitivity and a unique ability to master an extraordinary range of styles. As I write this I'm listening to his 1937 recording of Tristan und Isolde and am struck by the depth of sound, voicing, beauty of line; his Carmen on the other hand shows an effervescence mere mortals find hard to capture. Beecham's genius is brought home to me most when I'm working on pieces he recorded. His La bohème is perhaps the finest document we have. It's full of life. and heart but, most striking of all, is his ability to phrase with peerless elegance, keeping the music buoyant for entire acts, never earthbound.



BEAUX ARTS TRIO

(1955-2008) Piano trio

Founded in 1955, the Beaux Arts Trio performed and recorded until 2008 and are recognised as one of the great chamber ensembles of the 20th century.

BY SUSAN TOMES

The Beaux Arts Trio, probably the first full-time piano trio, reigned over the trio world for half a century. Their recordings were benchmarks to which later groups constantly found themselves compared; it felt very daring to take a different path to theirs. Although the trio's name remained constant over the years, there were a number of personnel changes among the string players. People tend to have their favourite 'incarnation' of the Beaux Arts Trio, but common to all was the formidable pianist Menahem Pressler to whom I had the pleasure of playing at the Banff Centre in Canada when I was a young professional. I vividly remember his irrepressible energy and willpower, qualities so central to the personality of the Beaux Arts Trio through the years. His appetite for travelling and giving concerts is legendary in the profession.



BIRGIT NILSSON

(1918-2005) Soprano

One of the great Wagnerian singers of the past century, the Swedish dramatic soprano Birgit Nilsson was the natural successor to the Norwegian Kirsten Flagstad. She sang roles requiring huge stamina and left incomparable recordings of Wagner, Strauss and Puccini.

BY DEBORAH VOIGT

Birgit Nilsson's name and legacy will live on in the recorded history of Wagner's music forever. Her performances on stage can only be rivalled by her magnificent recordings, to be cherished by fans and marvelled at by those of us who endeavour to keep the music of Wagner alive and relevant in the 21st century. Her ability to galvanise the listener with her special sound was unique, and we are all extremely fortunate to have this sound preserved for our continued enjoyment and edification.

ITZHAK PERLMAN

(b1945) Violinist

Since his debut in 1963, Perlman has occupied a place as one of the great violinists of our time, a player with a remarkable technique and an elegant tone.

BY TASMIN LITTLE

As a very young girl, even before I had begun playing the violin, I was aware of the name of Itzhak Perlman – he was on the radio more frequently than any other violinist at the time and his name was synonymous with beautiful, polished violin-playing and flawless technique.

One of my first LPs was Perlman playing Paganini's Violin Concerto No 1 and Sarasate's fiendish *Carmen Fantasy*. The music sounds effortless under his fingers – the smooth, creamy sound and unerring intonation are an unmistakable hallmark. It was a recording that inspired me again and again to keep practising...

The breadth of his repertoire is awesome – he has sought out unplayed works, such as Bruch's Violin Concerto No 2, as well as delivering superb renditions of Brahms, Beethoven, solo Bach or a dazzling array of infectious salon pieces. Perlman is a master violinist whose place in history is assured.



TED PERRY

(1931-2003) Record label founder Raising funds by driving a minicab and an ice-cream van, Perry founded Hyperion in 1980 and built it into one of the finest independent classical labels.

BY LESLIE HOWARD

At my first meeting with Ted Perry, after a recital in 1980 with mandolinist Keith Harris, he struck me as an amiable, somewhat dishevelled enthusiast. And when he asked us to make a record for his brand-new label I thought it would be a jolly thing to do, but wasn't quite sure if matters would ever lead any further. By the end of the great Ted's life, I had gone on to make well over 100 records for him, and his enthusiasm and support, plus his splendid knack of choosing a special stable of artists, had made Hyperion the best possible of all classical labels. Ted's passion for music that he liked far outweighed his marketing skills - I know he made many records that did not recover their production costs - but his risky nature actually defined the success of the company: the enormous projects of such artists as Graham Johnson, Robert King and myself would never have been possible in any other hands.



NIKOLAUS HARNONCOURT

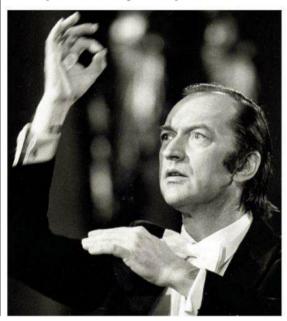
 (b_{1929}) Conductor

One of the great pioneers of the period-instrument movement, Harnoncourt founded his Concentus Musicus Wien in 1953 and helped create a new audience for this historically informed approach.

BY THOMAS FEY

Without doubt, Nikolaus Harnoncourt has contributed enormously to the history of musical interpretation and hopefully he will do so for many more years to come. Without him, the historically informed performance practice as we know it today would hardly be possible. As I learned from him personally, I know he had to fight hard in order to gain his place in the music scene – he was once widely despised by the so-called connoisseurs.

An adventurous spirit with musical passion, a strong willpower, a nearly encyclopedic knowledge, a 'perfect wife' and, as he himself calls it, a 'restless patience' are only a few of his attributes. What I will remember all my life are his two credos: 'Every performance is a premiere'; and 'Make music with 49 per cent knowledge and 51 per cent intuition'.



SIR JOHN BARBIROLLI

(1899-1970) Conductor

Barbirolli was closely associated with English music, particularly as a wonderful interpreter of Elgar and Vaughan Williams. He headed the Hallé from 1943 to 1970.

BY JOHN WILSON

I was 11 years old when I first heard a Barbirolli recording – Elgar's *Serenade for Strings* – and I've idolised this great musician ever since. He remains the conductor I revere above all others. As well as being an interpretative artist of the first rank across an enormously wide repertoire, he had an unequalled ability to make any orchestra give of their absolute best for him. Thorough in rehearsal and attentive to the smallest details of a score whilst always maintaining the grand sweep of a piece, he loved to make records; how lucky we are to have such a comprehensive record of his music-making. Barbirolli was a very great conductor and a very great man.



CLAUDIO ARRAU

(1903-91) Pianist

Born in Chile, Arrau studied in Berlin with Liszt's pupil Martin Krause. This training made him a great interpreter of the core Romantic repertoire.

BY GARRICK OHLSSON

Arrau's sound was big, round, resonant, deep, dark, and multi-hued. Then there was his sovereign technical mastery, but one difference from some of the other titans was in how he resolved the most awkwardly difficult but unshowy passages in a completely musical way. He made no external reference to pianistic heroics, something only very good pianists would even notice. Finally, emotion: Arrau at his best never held back - he lived the emotional flow of the music as a great actor lives a role. His stylistic range was broad, as was his repertory.

In 1973 and 1974, I was fortunate to have about two dozen lessons with him. He took nothing less than seriously and, for him, to be entertaining was anathema. I never challenged Arrau; I revered him. Now, as a mature artist, I wish that I could sit down with him for a less reverent conversation. There would be so much to talk about.



CECILIA BARTOLI

(b1966) Mezzo-soprano

Bartoli is at the pinnacle of her profession. She pursues a singular path, creating her own projects, championing unusual works and selling vast numbers of recordings.

BY IEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

I have been lucky to work with Bartoli on many occasions and she is just an extraordinary talent. What she is capable of musically and technically is just unique, a miracle. But add to that the gift that she has for communicating electrifying energy when she is on stage and it all makes for something which is really remarkable. To have the talent is one thing but to make that connection as well - that's very special.

When Cecilia is on stage every person in the audience thinks that she is singing just for them. And when she speaks to you it is precisely the same: she looks you right in the eyes and, regardless of who you are, at that particular moment you are the most important person in the world for her.

When you perform with her you can't breathe, you are just under her spell. The moment she steps on stage she owns it, she owns the whole room.



LANG LANG

(b1982) Pianist

He shot to fame as an 11-year-old and gained a loyal following. His prodigious technique and ability to learn music quickly has given him a huge repertoire.

BY JOHN AXELROD

With status comes pride, and no musician from China, representing the hopes and dreams of its billion-plus citizens, has captured his country's heart and soul, as well as the rest of the world's, as Lang Lang. His technique is insurmountable; he can play anything. His artistry is pure, mature, the perfect balance of freedom and security. Together, we have played Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Rachmaninov, and, of course, Rhapsody in Blue, in collaboration with jazz legend Herbie Hancock. We can all agree that Lang Lang is a citizen of the world, a musician par excellence, and a human being and friend who cares not only about the people with whom he makes music, but also the public, especially young ones, that, like China, are the future. For if the future is more of Lang Lang, there will certainly be more audiences, and the classical world will be all the better off for it.



amazon.co.uk

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Amazon.co.uk and EMI have joined us to celebrate the Gramophone Hall of Fame with a free download playlist of more than 75 minutes, showcasing some of the greatest music-making by 15 of the artists featured in these pages - all taken from the EMI archives. Simply log on to Amazon.co.uk to download your 10 free tracks! *

GRAMOPHONE HALL OF FAME: THE PLAYLIST

Herbert von Karajan

Nicolai: The Merry Wives of Windsor -

Maria Callas and producer **Walter Legge** Puccini: Tosca - Vissi d'arte

Claudio Abbado

Mozart: Clarinet Concerto -Finale (Sabine Meyer cl)

Wilhelm Furtwängler

Wagner: Tristan und Isolde - Liebestod

Mstislav Rostropovich and Leonard Bernstein

Schumann: Cello Concerto - Finale

Sviatoslav Richter and Carlos Kleiber

Dvořák: Piano Concerto Andante sostenuto

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Daniel Barenboim

Mahler Rückert-Lieder 'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen'

Jascha Heifetz and Sir John Barbirolli

Saint-Saëns: Havanaise

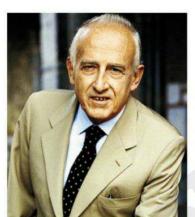
Plácido Domingo

Verdi: Aida - 'Se quell guerrier io fossi'

Sir Simon Rattle

Holst: The Planets - Jupiter

*Only available to UK readers



MAURIZIO POLLINI

(b1942) Pianist

Pollini made his recital debut aged nine and won the Chopin Piano Competition in 1960. His vast repertoire ranges from Bach to Boulez.

BY JAMES JOLLY

Pollini's approach can be rigorous - just listen to the power and intensity he brings to the last Beethoven piano sonatas - but he can also plumb the emotional depths of a Schubert sonata or a Brahms piano concerto with a big heart. He is magnificent in music of the 20th century (Stravinsky's Three Movements from Petrushka), and has recently brought his formidable technique and concentration to the music of Bach. He is a towering musical presence, and one who stands alone.

HALL OF FAME ONLINE



You've read our coverage of the 50 people who have been

welcomed into the Gramophone Hall of Fame - but that's just the beginning. We've scoured the Gramophone Archive to find the best recordings, the most enlightening articles and the most revealing interviews relating to all 50, written by Gramophone's finest writers, past and present.

Visit gramophone.co.uk/halloffame to start exploring!

Bard SummerScape 2012 presents seven weeks of opera, music, theater, dance, films, and cabaret. The season's focal point is the 23rd annual Bard Music Festival, which this year celebrates the French composer Camille Saint-Saëns, whose remarkable career shaped not only the history of music, but also the ways in which that history was transmitted and communicated to the public. SummerScape takes place in the extraordinary Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts and other venues on Bard College's stunning Mid-Hudson Valley campus.

Tickets and information:

845-758-7900 fishercenter.bard.edu

Sign up now for the Fisher Center e-newsletter. E-members receive special offers, including discounts, throughout the season. Text "FISHERCENTER" to 22828 or e-mail fishercenter@bard.edu to sign up.



Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Opera

THE KING IN SPITE OF HIMSELF (Le roi malgré lui)

Music by Emmanuel Chabrier Libretto by Emile de Najac and Paul Burani American Symphony Orchestra Conducted by Leon Botstein Directed by Thaddeus Strassberger

Set design by Kevin Knight

This tale of Henri de Valois, a 16th-century French noble elected by the people of Poland to be their king, despite his great reluctance to be away from France, has been much praised for the quality of its music—indeed, no less a master than Maurice Ravel claimed that Chabrier's score changed the course of French harmony.

SOSNOFF THEATER July 27 - August 5

Dance

COMPAGNIE FÊTES GALANTES

Choreography by Béatrice Massin

Founded in 1993 by Béatrice Massin, Compagnie fêtes galantes brings together baroque style and contemporary choreography, creating a unique kind of baroque dancing that engages and appeals to a modern sensibility.

SOSNOFF THEATER July 6-8

Theater

THE IMAGINARY INVALID (Le malade imaginaire)

By Molière

Directed by Erica Schmidt

The final play by a master of comedy, *The Imaginary Invalid* is among Molière's greatest works. The illusory agonies of the wealthy Argan, a housebound hypochondriac who sorely desires to marry his daughter to a doctor, have proved tonic to audiences ever since the play premiered in 1673.

THEATER TWO July 13 -22

Bard Music Festival

Twenty-third Season SAINT-SAËNS AND HIS WORLD

Two weekends of concerts, panels, and other events bring the musical world of French composer Camille Saint-Saëns vividly to life.

Weekend One: Paris and the Culture of Cosmopolitanism includes a radical reconsideration of Saint-Saëns's most famous piece, *The Carnival of Animals*, and examines the composer's debt to many of his contemporaries and predecessors.

Weekend Two: Confronting Modernism explores music by many of Saint-Saëns's contemporaries — including Franck, Chabrier, and Fauré—and exoticism in music and the influence of Wagner.

August 10-12 and 17-19

Film Festival

FRANCE AND THE COLONIAL IMAGINATION

The SummerScape 2012 film festival explores the legacy of French colonialism in Africa and Southeast Asia.

Thursdays and Sundays, July 12 - August 12

Spiegeltent

CABARET and FAMILY FARE

The mirrored summer pavilion is the stage for a rich array of performers, from dauntless acrobats to bawdy cabaret acts. Enjoy light fare, meals, and drinks selected from Hudson Valley farms, wineries, and breweries.

July 6 - August 19





FESTIVALS



Aldeburgh's Snape Maltings Concert Hall plays host to a Knussen celebration

ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL

June 8-24

Oliver Knussen, who turns 60 this year, is artist-in-residence for the 65th Aldeburgh Festival, which opens with a multimedia performance of his classic, Maurice Sendak-inspired operas Higglety Pigglety Pop! and Where the Wild Things Are. Pierre-Laurent Aimard's third year as artistic director of the festival also includes a debut from Philippe Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale Gent as well as performances by the Monteverdi Choir, Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI, Dawn Upshaw and the CBSO, Miklós Perényi, and Ian Bostridge. Subject of this year's Composer Portrait is Helmut Lachenmann, and other composers in the spotlight include Bartók, Elliott Carter and Charles Ives; the festival rounds off with the European premiere of the latter's vast Universe Symphony. aldeburgh.co.uk

BATH INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

May 30 - June 10

Joanna MacGregor marks her seventh and final year as artistic director of the festival with some special projects including the UK stage premiere of Vivaldi's L'Olimpiade, performed in Bath Abbey by La Serenissima; a revival of Mozart's Die Zauberflöte; and appearances from Alison Balsom (who plays Haydn's Trumpet Concerto with the European Chamber Orchestra),

I Fagiolini with Bath Camerata, and Emma Kirkby with Anthony Rooley. New commissions include Joanna MacGregor's own settings of recently dicovered poetry by Angela Carter, and there will be a spectacular performance of Cage's Musicircus to mark the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth. bathmusicfest.org.uk

BBC PROMS

July 13 - September 8

This year the Proms form part of the London 2012 Festival and the BBC's Cultural Olympiad. As ever, the programme of the Proms is kept secret until April. Full details will be published in our July issue. Don't miss it!

bbc.co.uk/proms

BRADFIELD FESTIVAL OF MUSIC June 23-30

The beautiful and intimate setting of St Nicholas Church in the pretty Yorkshire town of High Bradfield welcomes brilliant young pianist Benjamin Grosvenor to this year's festival, as well as Tom Davey and the Meirion Ensemble, the London Soloists Ensemble, and 4 Girls 4 Harps. Local artists taking part include Sheffield City Opera, and 2010 BBC Chorister of the Year, Ella Taylor,

bradfieldfestivalofmusic.co.uk

BURY ST EDMUNDS FESTIVAL May 17-27

Classical events in this year's packed

schedule include performances by the Royal Academy Harp Ensemble, organist Colin Walsh, the Grimethorpe Colliery Band, the Britten Sinfonia and The Sixteen. Other distinguished artists include pianist Imogen Cooper (who plays Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms and Schumann), violinist Viktoria Mullova, and guitarist John Williams.

buryfestival.co.uk

BUXTON FESTIVAL

July 7-25

Conductor Stephen Barlow picks up the baton as artistic director with fully staged productions of Richard Strauss's Intermezzo, featuring Janis Kelly, Handel's oratorio Jephtha, and a double bill of Sibelius's The Maiden in the Tower and Rimsky-Korsakov's Kashchei the Immortal. Visiting opera companies include Bampton Classical Opera who dust off Marcos António da Fonseca Portugal's The Marriage of Figaro and La Serenissima with Vivaldi's L'Olimpiade. The recital series, featuring soprano Joan Rodgers, and the Russian Chamber Philharmonic St Petersburg, is as strong as ever. Plus, the festival's literary series makes a reappearance.

buxtonfestival.co.uk

CAMBRIDGE SUMMER MUSIC

July 13 - August 4

Highlights of this year's festival include an evening featuring the complete Brandenburg Concertos performed by Florilegium, a solo recital by violinist

Peter Sheppard Skærved and the Armonico Consort in a glittering programme of Bach, Alessandro Scarlatti and Handel, featuring soprano Elin Manahan Thomas and trumpeter Crisnian Steele-Perkins Other artists appearing include the Benedetti Trio, Melvyn Tan and tenor Nicky Spence. cambridgesummermusic.com

CARDUCCI FESTIVAL

May 25-27

The Carducci Quartet's sixth weekend festival, which takes place in the picturesque setting of Highnam, Gloucestershire, this year welcomes clarinettist Emma Johnson and baritone Roderick Williams. Repertoire covers a wide variety of chamber music by Brahms, Barber, Beethoven, Shostakovich, Mozart and Debussy. carducciquartet.com/festivals

CHELTENHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 4-15

The festival is flying the flag for British music this Diamond Jubilee year with Holst's chamber opera Sāvitri starring mezzo Sarah Connolly, I Fagiolini singing music by Tallis, and Nigel Kennedy and Steven Isserlis joining forces to play Elgar's Piano Quintet. Isserlis is also featured soloist for Elgar's Cello Concerto. Elsewhere, Melvyn Tan plays Ravel's Piano Concerto in G, lan Burnside performs his own A Soldier and a Maker, and the BBC Singers give the UK premiere of a new mass setting by Rautavaara. cheltenhamfestivals.com

CHESTER SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 1-16

This two-week festival has always celebrated the voice, but this year also embraces musical talent from the Far East, including guitarist Xuefei Yang, pianist HJ Lim, and violinist Ami Oike. The major choral concert showcases Brahms's German Requiem featuring the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Vasily Petrenko. Other highlights include the Penguin Café Orchestra-inspired Sundog, and an appearance by Norwegian trumpeter Tine Thing Helseth who, alongside her quintet, performs jazz and fusion. chesterfestivals.co.uk

CHICHESTER FESTIVITIES

June 24 - July 14

Chichester's magnificent Norman

48 GRAMOPHONE MAY 2012 gramophone.co.uk



FOCUS ON... BEVERLEY AND EAST RIDING EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

May 24-26

The beautiful cathedrals and churches of Yorkshire's East Riding resound for the 25th anniversary of this early music festival. This year's guest artists include renowned vocalists Stile Antico with a new programme of music, 'The Rose in Flower', from the Renaissance, La Serenissima (pictured), who perform Vivaldi, the maverick Red Priest, lutenist William Carter, and prize-winning vocal ensemble Grand Désir, who make their festival debut. ncem.couk/bemf

Cathedral, Goodwood Racecourse, St John's Chapel and medieval Vicars' Hall and are among the settings for concerts, talks and exhibitions. Musical highlights include a recital of Wolf's complete *Italienisches Liederbuch* by soprano Joan Rodgers and baritone Roderick Williams, the Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Russian Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra by candlelight. chifest.org.uk

CHIPPING CAMPDEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

May 6-19

Festival president, pianist Paul Lewis, continues his two-year exploration of Schubert's late piano music, and performs Schwanengesang with tenor Mark Padmore. The Schubert theme continues with two sublime chamber works: the Octet, played by the Nash Ensemble, and the C major Quintet, featuring the Elias Ouartet who make their festival debut. Another artist appearing for the first time this year is pianist Imogen Cooper, who plays three programmes, including a song recital with soprano Kate Royal. Further highlights include The Sixteen, and the Academy of Ancient Music. campdenmusicfestival.co.uk

CITY OF LONDON FESTIVAL

June 24 - July 27

The festival celebrates its golden jubilee this year, reflected in the season's exciting new commissions and ambitious programming, featuring more than 100 events over 34 days. Notable dates include the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Colin Davis's performing Berlioz's epic

Grande Messe des morts in the iconic space of St Paul's Cathedral, and a recital by guitarist John Williams that echoes the first performance he gave at the festival 50 years ago. Featured composers include Tansy Davies, Nigel Osborne and Samuel Bordoli. colf.org

CORBRIDGE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

August 10-12

The Gould Piano Trio's August festival weekend in beautiful St Andrew's Church, Northumberland, features performances of Fauré's Piano Quartet, Saint-Saëns's Piano Trio No 2, and Brahms's two great string sextets. The trio are joined by clarinettist Robert Plane and the dazzling eight-hands, two-piano Estrella Quartet. corbridgefestival.co.uk

COSSINGTON -A SOMERSET SCHUBERTIAD

September 14-16

Cossington Concerts celebrates 10 years with a Schubertiad in Somerset, featuring recitals by pianist Julius Drake, soprano Elizabeth Watts and tenor James Gilchrist, as well as talks by *Gramophone* critic Richard Wigmore. cossingtonconcerts.com

COTTIER CHAMBER MUSIC

June 1-22

Scottish performers converge on Glasgow's historic West End for a series of 30 chamber music concerts in the Cottier Theatre, a former church. Artists include the Dunedin Consort, Scottish Ensemble, Hebrides Ensemble, Solway Trio, Steven Osborne, and James MacMillan in conversation, with programmes that take in everything from Beethoven to Ronald Stevenson, as well as klezmer, jazz and folk music. cottierchamberproject.com

DORSET OPERA FESTIVAL July 25-28

Alongside two performances of Verdi's Il trovatore and Puccini's Suor Angelica, this weekend of opera in Dorset features the British stage premiere of comic opera Le Carrosse du Saint-Sacrement by the English polymath Lord Berners. Intriguingly, it's a setting of the same Merimée play Offenbach used for his operetta La Périchole. dorsetopera.com

EAST NEUK FESTIVAL

June 27 - July 1

The Fife chamber festival celebrates its eighth birthday with octets - by Schubert, Stravinsky and Mendelssohn - as well as an ongoing Late Beethoven strand, with performaces by the Hagen Quartet, and pianist Llŷr Williams.
There's a new venue too - the Cambo Barn, with a wonderfully spacious acoustic - where the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Alexander Janiczek present a programme of Pärt, MacMillan, Shostakovich and Barber.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

August 9 - September 2

International names converge on this most famous of summer festivals. It's a chance to hear the Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser-Möst, the London Symphony Orchestra under Valery Gergiev, the Budapest Festival Orchestra under Iván Fischer and the Australian Chamber Orchestra with Richard Tognetti, all in one city. There are world-class soloists featured in recital too, including Deborah Voigt and Leif Ove Andsnes. Opening proceedings are the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Edinburgh Festival Chorus performing Delius's A Mass of Life. Other dates to look out for include Donald Runnicles and the BBC SSO in Beethoven and Strauss. and a variety of opera: Tristan und Isolde from Welsh National Opera, Janáček's The Makropolous Case from Opera North, and Scottish Opera's commissions by James MacMillan, Craig Amstrong and Huw Watkins. eif.co.uk

ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 1-5

Devoted to reviving neglected English music, this Dorchester-on-Thames festival runs over the Jubilee bank holiday weekend and features two important world-premiere performances: Vaughan Williams's Fantasia for piano and orchestra, featuring Mark Bebbington and the BBC Concert Orchestra, and Martin Yates's realisation of Moeran's Symphony No 2. Piano music is a strong thread, with a two-piano performance of Holst's The Planets by York2 and an arrangement of Vaughan Williams's Job: A Masque for Dancing played by Iain Burnside. There is also a concert devoted to King Arthur, with music by Purcell and Britten, as well as choral events and song recitals.

GARSINGTON OPERA

June 2 - July 3

Now in its second year in its spectacular new home on the Wormsley Estate in the Chiltern Hills, Garsington Opera acknowledges the sporting events taking place in London with the world premiere of a new critical edition of Vivaldi's rarely performed L'Olimpiade. Baroque specialist Laurence Cummings conducts and David Freeman directs. Completing the trio of this season's operas are Offenbach's La Périchole and Mozart's Don Giovanni, conducted by Douglas Boyd. garsingtonopera.org

GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL OPERA

May 26 - August 26

The country house opera festival opens with a brand-new production of Janáček's The Cunning Little Vixen, directed by Melly Still and featuring Lucy Crowe. Robin Ticciati, who will be the festival's music director from 2014, conducts a new production of Le nozze di Figaro, and Laurent Pelly directs a double bill of Ravel's short operas L'heure espagnole and L'enfant et les sortilèges. Revivals include Rossini's La Cenerentola, directed by Peter Hall, David McVicar's La bohème, and another outing for the acclaimed 2009 production of Purcell's The Fairy Oueen. glyndebourne.com

GRANGE PARK OPERA

May 31 - July 10

Operas at the Grange this season are Puccini's Madama Butterfly, Mozart's Idomeneo and Tchaikovsky's The Queen of Spades, and later, at Nevill Holt, Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin. The festival also features baritone Simon Keenlyside in recital with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. grangeparkopera.co.uk

GREGYNOG FESTIVAL

June 15 - July 1

The theme for this year's festival is 'Venezia', exploring six centuries of music-making associated with the

chester summer music festival

30th June - 12th July 2012

Andrew Cornall -**Artistic Director**

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VILDE FRANG TINE THING HELSETH MUZSIKAS YIJIE SHI SARAH FOX HJLIM ...and many more

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Italian city, and framed by performances of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* and *Gloria*. Artists appearing this year include Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI, Le Concert Spirituel and La Venexiana, all making their Welsh debut. There is also an experimental programme by harpist Rhodri Davies and a recital by Chinese guitarist Xuefei Yang.

gwylgregynogfestival.org

HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

June 28 - July 29

Running over long weekends from June 28 to July 29, the 2012 Summer Festival reflects the nation's celebratory feel with a programme that promises the best in classical, orchestral and contemporary music, as well as the return of the magical mirrored 'Spiegeltent' filled with laid-back Sunday sessions and local bands.

HATFIELD HOUSE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

harrogate-festival.org.uk

September 20-23

This new festival is curated by cellist Guy Johnston, and takes place in venues around his home county of Hertfordshire drawing upon an array of distinguished artists.

guy-johnston.com

IFORD ARTS

June 16 - August 11

The Iford Festival takes place in the Peto Garden cloister of Iford Manor near Bath. Alongside evenings of jazz and chamber music, there are three operas, sung in English: Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Verdi's *Falstaff* and Handel's *Susanna*.

ifordarts.co.uk

KING'S LYNN FESTIVAL

July 15-28

The Norfolk festival opens with a rousing performance by the acclaimed Grimethorpe Colliery Band. Other artists of note include The King's Singers, the Endellion Quartet, pianist Freddy Kempf, jazz duo Claire Martin and Richard Rodney Bennett, and 2010 BBC Young Musician of the Year, pianist Lara Melda.

kingslynnfestival.org.uk

LAKE DISTRICT SUMMER MUSIC

July 28 - August 12

Key events this year include a rare performance of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's complete *Hiawatha* trilogy, and an all-Schubert recital by Paul Lewis, who makes his festival debut. Other artists appearing include I Fagiolini, the Škampa Quartet and the Gould Piano Trio, as well as festival regulars the Chilingirian Quartet.

ldsm.org.uk

LAMMERMUIR FESTIVAL

September 14-23

Taking place in historic venues around East Lothian, the Lammermuir Festival is now in its third year. The opening concert features the Dunedin Consort in Bach's sublime St John Passion.

Other programming has a strong geographical element: the BBC SSO play music by Sibelius and Nielsen, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and up-and-coming guitarist Sean Shibe perform Rodrigo's evocative Concierto de Aranjuez, and La Serenissima take a musical journey to Venice with Vivaldi's The Four Seasons.

lammermuirfestival.co.uk

LEICESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

September 13-16

The theme of oboist and conductor Nicholas Daniel's festival is 'The Art of Music', with a selection of works inspired by art, ranging from Tarkovsky to Grünewald. Daniel and the Carducci Quartet focus on Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and contemporary composers Michael Berkeley, Jonathan Harvey and David Matthews. leicesterinternationalmusicfestival. org.uk

LICHFIELD FESTIVAL

July 4-15

Lichfield Cathedral resounds with an all-English programme to open this year's festival as Sir Mark Elder and the Hallé perform Elgar's Symphony No 2 and Sea Pictures, featuring mezzo Alice Coote. Also appearing are tenor lan Bostridge, who gives a Schubert recital, and the Birmingham Bach Choir and London Baroque Players under Paul Spicer, who perform Bach's Mass in B Minor.

lichfieldfestival.org

LONGBOROUGH FESTIVAL OPERA

June 9 - July 29

This country-house festival in the Cotswolds resounds with three operas: Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová*, and Wagner's *Gotterdämmerung*, the final instalment



FOCUS ON... KING'S PLACE FESTIVAL

September 12-16

The festival opens with performances from the London Sinfonietta and the Orchestra of St John's playing Dvořák and Tchaikovsky; other groups include the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Aurora Orchestra. This year's line-up of soloists include Dmitry Sitkovetsky, who presents a programme of Bach, Brahms and Stravinsky, and pianist Leon McCawley, who plays two recitals devoted to Debussy. Festival regulars, the Sacconi Quartet (pictured) and the Chilingirian quartet, make an appearance, as well as cellist Matthew Barley, who teams up with jazz pianist Julian Joseph and classical guitarist Morgan Szymanski. kingsplace.co.uk

in the festival's ongoing *Ring* cycle. **Ifo.org.uk**

LUFTHANSA FESTIVAL OF BAROQUE MUSIC

May 18-26

This London festival draws on the events that dominate the city this summer with the theme 'Contests, Competitions and the Harmony of Nations'. A highlight is the UK concert premiere of Vivaldi's opera L'Olimpiade, performed by Vivaldi specialists La Serenissma. Meanwhile, Jordi Savall and his Le Concert des Nations open events with a multinational programme of music. Elsewhere, the Dunedin Consort and Players make their festival debut, and singer Vivien Ellis and fiddler Giles Lewin give a quirky recital devoted to 18th-century songs about sport. The Early Opera Company provide the festival's thrilling finale, 'Handel and the Rival Oueens', which tells the story of Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni, the two competing prima donnas who caused Handel such headaches

lufthansafestival.org.uk

MAYFIELD FESTIVAL

May 4-13

The East Sussex village of Mayfield

is host to this biennial festival, which welcomes an exciting roster of artists, including the John Wilson Orchestra with 'The Golden Age of Broadway', as well as acclaimed choral group Tenebrae. Emerging young talent is also celebrated, with concerts given by the award-winning Finzi Quartet, the Rose Trio and guitarist Sean Shibe. mayfieldfestival.co.uk

MENDELSSOHN ON MULL

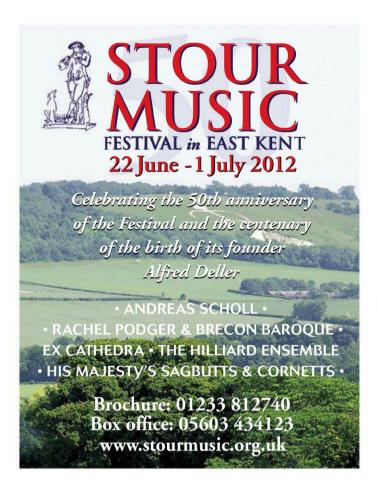
July 1-7

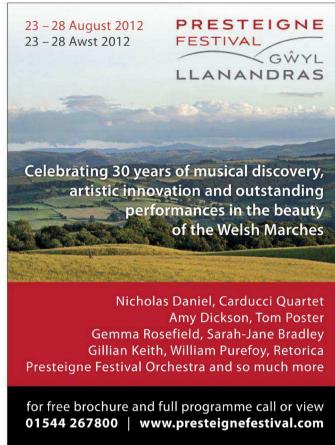
With concerts taking place in churches and castles on the Hebridean island of Mull, as well as St John's Cathedral in Oban, the festival features chamber music by Mendelssohn, Schoenberg, Wolf, Mozart and Brahms. The Chilingirian Quartet perform and head the mentoring programme. mullfest.org.uk

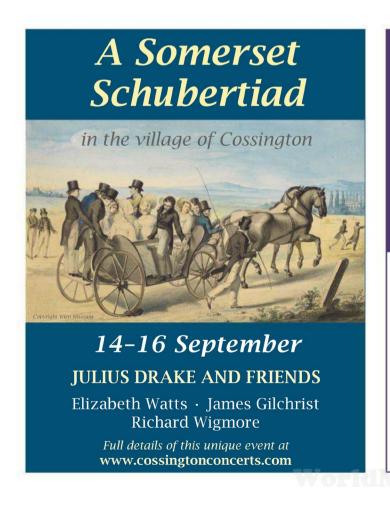
MUSIC AT PAXTON

July 13-22

Paxton House, a Palladian mansion near Berwick-upon-Tweed, hosts this chamber music festival in its Picture Gallery and grounds. Featured artists include violinist Alina Ibragimova and pianist Cédric Tiberghien, the Doric Quartet, harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani, and the Scottish Ensemble



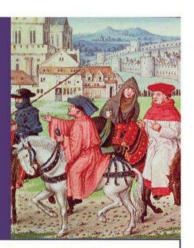




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- Jack Bruce & His Big Blues Band . Carol Kidd
- Kassidy . Tim Brooke-Taylor
- Martin Taylor & Martin Simpson
- . John Peel's Shed . Ceilidh with Skipinnish
- · Art on the River

www.perthfestival.co.uk













who perform Schubert's *Trout* Quintet. **musicatpaxton.co.uk**

MUSIC AT PLUSH

June 1 - September 19

Cellist Adrian Brendel's festival runs over two weekends in June and one in September in the Dorset village of Plush. Notable for its imaginative programming, the festival features, in 2012, concerts of Debussy, Chopin and Elliott Carter; Beethoven and Brett Dean; and Ives, Messiaen and Schumann. Regular Imogen Cooper returns to play chamber music, and Radu Lupu provides an exciting finale. musicatplush.net

MUSIC IN THE ROUND

May 11-19

Ensemble 360's Sheffield festival focuses on the musical life of Paris, with talks, concerts and workshops. Notable events include performances of Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, an exploration of the jazz age and its influence on Ravel, Stravinsky, Milhaud and Gershwin, and a concert devoted to Francis Poulenc.

musicintheround.co.uk

NEWBURY SPRING FESTIVAL May 12-26

Alongside the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the festival celebrates a host of musical anniversaries: the Brodsky Quartet's 40th, the Berlin Symphony Orchestra's 60th, His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts' 30th, Stephen Hough in recital for his 50th birthday, and Owain Arwel Hughes conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to mark his 70th birthday. Other artists of note include harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani and guitarist Miloš Karadaglić.

newburyspringfestival.org.uk

NORTH NORFOLK FESTIVAL

August 22 - September 2

The North Norfolk Festival welcomes back the distinguished pianist Melvyn Tan on August 15 who gives a pre-festival concert, before proceedings begin in earnest with a Bach recital by violinist Laura Samuel and viola player Simon Rowland-Jones. The festival also features cellist Alasdair Tait, Ensemble 360 and Stephen Cleobury. northnorfolkmusicfestival.com

NORFOLK & NORWICH FESTIVAL May 11-26

The festival celebrates the orchestra this year with five major ensembles:

the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, the Britten Sinfonia, the Aurora Orchestra, Spira mirabilis, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Besides this, The Sixteen, Cristina Ortiz and The Opera Group make their festival debuts alongside popular lunchtime concerts given by Royal Academy of Music rising stars.

NORTH YORK MOORS CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

August 12-25

The theme for the fourth edition of this Royal Philharmonic Society Awardshortlisted festival is 'Along the Danube'. Concerts take place in churches and Abbeys and artistic director Jamie Walton has programmed an exciting mix of music, ranging from Bach, Haydn and Spohr, to Enescu, Penderecki and Mendelssohn.

OPERA HOLLAND PARK

June 7 - August 4

This popular London festival stages six operas, all in brand-new productions. The season's rarity is a one-act opera by Mascagni, Zanetto, for just two singers, featured in a double bill with Puccini's Gianni Schicchi. Other productions include Mozart's Così fan tutte, Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin, and Verdi's Falstaff. There is also a revival of Tobias Picker's The Fantastic Mr Fox. operahollandpark.com

OUNDLE

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

July 13-22

Susan Lansdale's first year as director features storytelling as its main theme. Classical music highlights include *The Lion and the Unicorn*, a 17th-century concert with lutenist Jacob Heringman and viol player Susanna Pell, the Aurora Orchestra with organist Robert Quinney, and performances by Trio Fibonacci and Dame Gillian Weir. **oundlefestival.org.uk**

OXFORD MAY MUSIC

May 2-7

This festival is a fusion of music, science and the arts, with concerts following lectures on subjects as diverse as nanotechnology, brain biology and art. Artists appearing include clarinettist Michael Collins, the Navarra Quartet, Guy Johnston, festival artistic director Jack Liebeck, and pianist Piers Lane,

who, together with actress Patricia Routledge, tells the story of Dame Myra Hess and her famous National Gallery concerts during the Second World War. oxfordmaymusic.co.uk

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OXFORD PHILOMUSICA INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL

July 28 - August 5

This Oxford-based Piano Festival and Summer Academy, led by artistic director Marios Papadopoulos, is a summer residency held at St Hilda's College, with masterclasses taking place in the Jacqueline Du Pré Music Building and the University's Faculty of Music. This season features concerto performances from piano soloists Sergei Babayan and Menahem Pressler, alongside orchestral works performed by the Philomusica.

oxfordphil.com

PERTH FESTIVAL OF ARTS

May 17-27

This year's festival features English Touring Opera in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, as well as an appearance from the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, and a celebration of Kathleen Ferrier through songs and letters. Nigel Kennedy closes events, performing Brahms's Violin Concerto with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Andrew Litton. **perthfestival.co.uk**

PORTSMOUTH FESTIVITIES

22 June - 1 July

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth 200 years ago and the festival celebrates this with a storytelling theme. There are also performances by the Brodsky Quartet, clarinettist Emma Johnson, a cappella vocal octet VOCES8, and pianist-composer Gwilym Simcock.

RYEDALE FESTIVAL July 13-29

Central to events is a production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, which also introduces the festival's theme of Russian music. Internationally acclaimed artists appearing in venues around north and east Yorkshire include soprano Kate Royal, cellist Adrian Brendel, trumpeter Tine Thing Helseth, the Nash Ensemble, Northern Sinfonia, Leopold Trio and the Orchestra of Opera North.

ST CHAD'S FESTIVAL

May 4-7

This year's weekend of festivities opens with an organ recital by Martyn Rawles in Lichfield Cathedral. The festival also features performances of Elgar's *Serenade for Strings*, Poulenc's Organ Concerto, and Mozart's Requiem at St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury. stchadsfestival.org.uk

ST ENDELLION SUMMER FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

July 31 - August 10

Mark Padmore, new artistic director of the festival, performs the title-role of Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, the centrepiece of this year's festival. Events begin with a performance of Beethoven's lyrical Piano Concerto No 4, featuring soloist Charles Owen. Other works include Mozart's C minor Mass, Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*, Britten's *Les illuminations* and Brahms's Symphony No 2, conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth. endellionfestivals.org.uk

onaomon con raioro, gran

ST MAGNUS FESTIVAL June 22-27

Artists appearing at Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's festival on the Orkney Islands



Sir Mark Elder conducts at Lichfield



Ibragimova and Tiberghien at Paxton

54 GRAMOPHONE MAY 2012



FOCUS ON... PRESTEIGNE FESTIVAL

August 23-28

The contemporary music festival in the Welsh borders turns 30 this year and features Sally Beamish as composer-in-residence. There are also some exciting commissions, including a saxophone concerto by Peter Sculthorpe featuring Amy Dickson, variations for string orchestra by Matthew Taylor, an oboe quintet from Michael Berkeley featuring Nicholas Daniel, and a string quartet by John McCabe. Other artists appearing include cellist Gemma Rosefield and soprano Gillian Keith, alongside the Presteigne Festival Orchestra (pictured), conducted by artistic director, George Vass. presteignefestival.com

include the Royal Scottish National Orchestra under Sian Edwards, who perform Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, the Trondheim Soloists, Florilegium, mezzo Catherine Wyn-Rogers, soprano Gweneth-Ann Jeffers and pianist Ashley Solomon. There is also a Midsummer Opera Gala featuri ng Bizet's *Carmen* and pre-concert talks by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Sally Beamish.

stmagnusfestival.com

SALISBURY INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

May 25 - June 9

Now officially rebranded the Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival thanks to a new sponsor, the theme of this year's programme is inspired by Brazilian culture, with dance and theatre events as well as literature, visual arts and music. Central to the classical music programme is a world premiere from Jonathan Dove, The Walk from the Garden.

salisburyfestival.co.uk

SHERBORNE ABBEY FESTIVAL May 4-8

This long weekend of music features clarinettist Emma Johnson and soprano Lesley Garrett appearing together in a specially devised programme. Other concerts include

The Tallis Scholars who peform *Spem in alium* with Bath Camerata, and a performance of Mozart's *Great* Mass in C minor, as well as liturgical services at Sherborne Abbey.

sherborneabbey.org

SOUTHERN CATHEDRALS FESTIVAL

July 19-21

Three cities take turns to host this festival; this year it's Salisbury, which holds services and concerts in its cathedral over three days. Highlights include a celebrity organ recital by Dame Gillian Weir; Bach partitas by candlelight; a programme of Bach, Mozart and Michael Haydn sung by the three participating cathedral choirs of Salisbury, Chichester and Winchester; and the festival finale, a performance of Handel's *Messiah*.

southerncathedralsfestival.org.uk

SPITALFIELDS FESTIVAL

June 8-23

Taking place in historic venues around London's East End, the festival features associate artists Matthew Barley, who plays Tavener's *The Protecting Veil*, and the Gabrieli Consort and Players who perform Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and Stravinsky's Mass. New commissions include Howard Skempton's *Five Rings Triples* to be rung on the bells of

Christ Church Spitalfields. Other artists appearing include contemporary vocal ensemble Exaudi who perform the music of John Cage; Melyvn Tan, who plays a Bach rectial; Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra; Tafelmusik; and the Monteverdi Choir under Sir John Eliot Gardiner. spitalfieldsfestival.org.uk

SPRING SOUNDS

May 18 - June 15

The Orchestra of the Swan's festival in Stratford-upon-Avon celebrates English composers this year. Highlights include Julian Lloyd Webber playing Delius's Cello Concerto, the world premieres of John McCabe's Trumpet Concerto *La Primavera* and Deborah Pritchard's *Skyspace* for piccolo trumpet and orchestra, and a performance of John Ireland's Piano Concerto by Mark Bebbington to mark the 50th anniversary of the composer's death. orchestraoftheswan.org

SWALEDALE FESTIVAL

May 19 - June 3

This Yorkshire festival devoted to music, poetry and nature welcomes two recitals from the Brodsky Quartet, as well as a stop from 'Olympianist' Anthony Hewitt on his journey from Land's End to John O'Groats. Other distinguished musicians include the Dutch 'Gypsy jazz' violinist Tim Kliphuis and his trio, Claire Martin and Richard Rodney Bennett, The King's Singers, the European Union Chamber Orchestra, and local artists. swaledale-festival.org.uk

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL

July 21-28

It's the triennial turn of Hereford to host the festival, with a focus on English music. Proceedings open with an afternoon recital by distinguished artists Dame Felicity Lott and Graham Johnson, followed by a performance of Haydn's Creation. Cellist Julian Lloyd Webber plays Delius's Cello Concerto with the Philharmonia; the composer's Sea Drift is performed later in the festival alongside Elgar's The Music Makers with soloist Sarah Connolly. Other artists appearing include The King's Singers, clarinettist Emma Johnson, baritone Roderick Williams, organist Thomas Trotter and I Fagiolini.

3choirs.org

TILFORD BACH FESTIVAL May 25-27

The Tilford Bach Festival, held in a pretty Surrey village, is 60 this year and celebrates its own diamond jubilee with a programme of Bach and other Baroque music. Highlights include a concert featuring *The Musical Offering* alongside works from the court of

SUMMER FESTIVALS 2012

Frederick the Great; the St John Passion with soloists including Peter Harvey, Daniel Taylor, Charles Daniels and Julia Doyle; a performance by the London Mozart Players conducted by festival director Adrian Butterfield; and a visit from the Choir of the Theatre of Early Music, Montreal. tilbach.org.uk

ULVERSTON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

June 26 - July 1

The festival takes place in a lovely Lake District setting under the directorship of Anthony Hewitt, who gives a recital this year as well as performing with featured artist, the clarinettist Emma Johnson. Alongside talks, jazz and youth events, the festival features a special family concert, The Pied Piper of Hamelin, narrated by Emma Johnson with specially commissioned music by Jonathan Dove.

ulverstonmusicfestival.co.uk

WELSH PROMS

July 21-28

This ever-popular festival at St David's Hall, Cardiff, includes appearances from John Lill and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; a 'Brass and Voices' Prom from the Cory Band, Morriston Orpheus Choir and Pontarddulais Male Choir; children's events; an Organ Prom featuring Carlo Curley; a Jubilee Prom; and the Last Night event, that celebrates conductor Owain Arwel Hughes's 70th birthday.

WEST MEON CHAMBER MUSIC September 14-16

The Primrose Piano Quartet's festival, held in a Hampshire village, is now in its second year and spotlights the works of Debussy, whose 150th anniversary falls this summer. As well as a concert featuring Viennese composers, there are also family events and jazz.

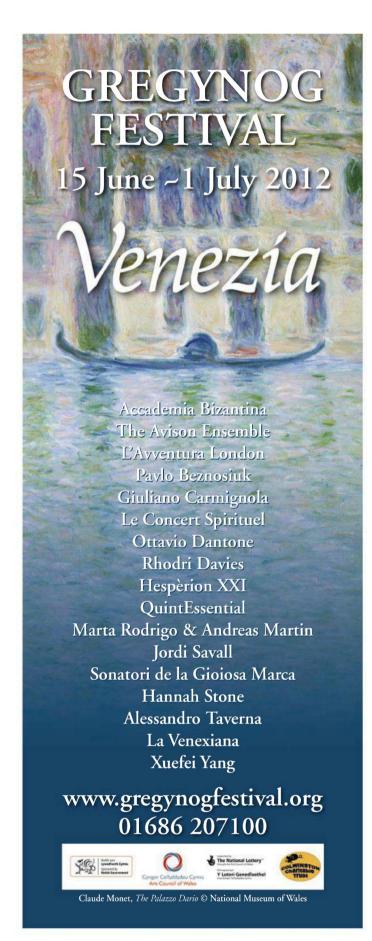
westmeonmusic.co.uk

YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 6-14

The theme this year is 'Crossing Borders', reflecting the age when new musical ideas and styles interconnected around Europe and travelled into the New World. As ever, the festival features a stellar line-up of artists, including Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI; Florilegium and Ashley Solomon, who join forces with the Arakaendar Bolivia Choir; The Sixteen and Harry Christophers; Gallicantus, performing with lutenist Elizabeth Kenny; and Robert Hollingworth's I Fagiolini, who present Alessandro Striggio's Mass in 40 Parts, staged in the round in York Minster.

ncem.co.uk



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BRIGHTON MAY 5-27



MUSIC TO MAKE YOU LISTEN – AND THINK

Guest director Vanessa Redgrave believes that music is the best contribution to conflict resolution – a philosophy that is reflected in a line-up of significant concerts and events, writes Sarah Kirkup





At any time of year, Brighton is a lively place to be. From promenading on the pier and strolling along the pebble-lined beach to browsing The Lanes and hearing a concert at the Dome, visitors soon find themselves soaking up the city's friendly, Bohemian atmosphere.

But for three weeks in May, that atmosphere is positively buzzing as the Brighton Festival comes to town. Regularly attracting more than 150,000 people, the annual event celebrates classical music, visual arts and film, books, dance, theatre and much more. Since 2009, the festival has invited a guest director to bring cohesion to the programme. British sculptor Anish Kapoor was the first to take up the mantle; this year, it's the turn of Vanessa Redgrave, the legendary British actress. And make no mistake, this is no mere PR exercise - Redgrave has not only influenced the events on offer, she is participating in them. As the festival's chief executive Andrew Comben told Gramophone, 'Vanessa has been actively involved in working with us on all aspects of the programme. Her wish to speak for those unable to speak for themselves is central to the music, theatre and dance we will present.'

One of the highlights of this year's festival is a 50th-anniversary concert performance of Tippett's King Priam, once described in these pages as 'a searing, unanswerable indictment of violence and militarism'. For Redgrave, a member of Amnesty International and Liberty, the opera's tale of betrayal, vengeance and human suffering is particularly poignant. 'I've helped festivals in very difficult war circumstances in Kosovo,' she told Gramophone. 'You have to create the conditions for a new world to arise out of a shattered old world - and that's what the arts can do.' The performance, at the Brighton Dome on May 27, features soloists Janice Watson, Mark Stone and Alan Oke, the Britten Sinfonia and the Brighton Festival Chorus, conducted by Sian Edwards.

Another highlight is A World I Loved, a staged multimedia event at the Theatre Royal on May 12, combining narration from Redgrave with live music, sung by the Brighton Festival Youth Choir. The performance is set against a backdrop of images illustrating the experiences of Wadad Makdisi Cortas, an Arab woman who lived through and chronicled one of the most tumultuous periods in recent world history. The event is in aid of the Barenboim-Said Foundation, which funds Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. 'The work they do with graduate students from Arab countries is wonderful,' Redgrave said. 'I think music is vital to any community.'

There are more than a dozen lunchtime 'You have to create the conditions for a new world to arise out of a shattered old world – and that's what the arts can do'

concerts at this year's festival, including one by Redgrave's close friend, Katharina Wolpe, who is playing at the Pavilion Theatre on May 19. Born in Vienna and separated from her parents at the age of six, Wolpe grew up in a series of refugee camps. Her recital is introduced by Redgrave, with whom Wolpe has appeared many times in aid of UNICEF. Other lunchtime artists include pianist Steven Osborne and three of nearby Glyndebourne's Jerwood Young Artists.

Glyndebourne is host to one of the festival's many other classical concerts. On May 6, the Hagen Quartet are joined by clarinettist Jörg Widmann for Brahms's Clarinet Quintet; concert-goers are invited to picnic in the beautiful grounds beforehand. At St Bartholomew's Church, meanwhile, The Cardinall's Musick are performing an all-Byrd programme on May 18. The Music Room is the venue for solo recitals by bass Matthew Rose and soprano Kate Royal, on May 13 and 22 respectively. And Dorset Gardens Peace Park is the location for a free New Music 20x12 commission, *Fire*, performed by fire artists, horn ensemble and community chorus on May 27.

'Brighton Festival makes a gigantic contribution to everyone,' Redgrave said. As if to reflect this, there are several large-scale events in addition to *King Priam*. The pinnacle is a performance of Shostakovich's Symphony No 13, *Babi Yar*. Inspired by its namesake poem depicting a 1941 Nazi massacre of Russian Jews, it's played by the Philharmonia under Ashkenazy on May 23.

With nearly 30 classical events, not to mention dozens of performances reflecting myriad other art forms, Brighton Festival is a true celebration of creative expression within a tight-knit, seaside community. For Redgrave, this can only be a good thing. 'Music uplifts everyone, young and old,' she told *Gramophone*. 'When times are difficult beyond belief, economically and in terms of living day by day, dance, poetry, literature and music especially can make a difference.' **brightonfestival.org**

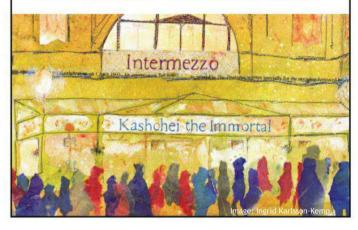
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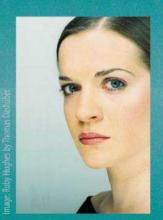
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Composer-in-Residence Thomas Larcher

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www.westcorkmusic.ie



EUROPE FESTIVALS

AIX-EN-PROVENCE July 5-27

The festival's operatic output ranges from new productions of Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro and Charpentier's David et Jonathas to the world premiere of George Benjamin's Written on Skin. The concert programme focuses on French music and features Les Arts Florissants. the London Symphony Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Renée Fleming, Nikolaj Znaider, and Pierre-Laurent Aimard in recital.

festival-aix.com

BALTIC SEA FESTIVAL August 24 - September 1

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the festival opens with a multimedia performance of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde, performed by the Finnish Radio Symphony under artistic director Esa-Pekka Salonen. The festival anniversary concert features conductors Salonen and Valery Gergiev, soprano Nina Stemme and the Swedish Radio Symphony in the European premiere of Anders Hillborg's Sirens. There are also appearances from Daniel Harding, Martin Fröst, the Mariinsky Ballet and conductor Herbert Blomstedt.

balticseafestival.se

BEETHOVENFEST BONN

September 7 - October 7

'Art has a mind of its own' is Beethovenfest's theme this year. On the programme are such first-rate names as Lisa Batiashvili, András Schiff, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Philharmonia as orchestra-in-residence, Kent Nagano with the Bavarian State Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas with the London Symphony Orchestra. the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen under Paavo Järvi, and the Hilliard Ensemble

en beethovenfest de

BERGEN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

May 23 - June 6

Scandinavia's largest festival celebrates its diamond jubilee season this year, marking 60 years of artistic achievement with a fortnight of music, theatre, dance, opera and visual art. Opening and closing the festival are two contrasting operatic works - Handel's Serse, and concert performances of Berlioz's The Damnation of Faust starring tenor Paul Groves and bassbaritone Bryn Terfel with the Bergen



Beethovenfest Bonn explores music that has 'a mind of its own' this season

Philharmonic under Sir Andrew Davis. Leif Ove Andsnes takes to the stage to perform and conduct Beethoven's Piano Concertos Nos 1 and 2. Plus the NDR Radio Philharmonic perform two Tchaikovsky concerts featuring violinist Renaud Capuçon.

fib.no

BREGENZ FESTIVAL

July 18 - August 18

Giordano's Andrea Chénier comes to Bregenz's famous floating stage. starring Arnold Rawls and Héctor Sandoval in the title-role. Back on dry land is the world premiere of festival commission Solaris by Detlev Glanert, conducted by Markus Stenz. The orchestral programme offers further works by Glanert, performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra alongside music by Bruckner and Prokofiev, plus HK Gruber conducting Hanns Eisler, Kurt Weill and his own Frankenstein!!.

bregenzerfestspiele.com

DRESDEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

May 15 - June 3

Director Jan Vogler's programme takes as its central idea 'The Heart of Europe', exploring the cities of Vienna, Budapest and Prague through the music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms. Dvořák, Smetana, Schoenberg, Bartók and Ligeti. Hungarian and Austrian folk and gypsy influences are also explored in concerts featuring Daniel Barenboim and the Vienna

Philharmonic, the Pavel Haas Quartet, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and soloist/conductor Leif Ove Andsnes, the Czech Philharmonic under Ingo Metzmacher, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment with Ian Bostridge, and Camerata Salzburg with violinist/ conductor Thomas Zehetmair.

musikfestspiele.com

GÖTTINGEN HANDEL FESTIVAL May 17-28

'Love and Jealousy' are the themes of this year's festival, which includes opera. concerts, lectures and film screenings. New artistic director Laurence Cummings conducts the oratorio Esther starring Carolyn Sampson and lestyn Davies, and a semi-staged version of Aci, Galatea e Polifemo with mezzo Christine Rice. Andrew Parrott conducts the festival opera, Amadigi di Gaula, directed by Baroque specialist Siarid T'Hooft.

haendel-festspiele.de

GRAFENEGG FESTIVAL

August 23 - September 9

Grafeneag's picturesque castle and avant-garde open-air stage play host to an impressive line-up of artists and ensembles, with a special emphasis on composer-in-residence James MacMillan. Highlights include appearances by the Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser-Möst, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Riccardo Chailly,

the London Symphony Orchestra under Michael Tilson Thomas, the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski and the Rotterdam Philharmonic under Yannick Nézet-Séguin. lan Bostridge, Gerald Finley, Emanuel Ax and Nikolaj Znaider also appear as soloists. grafenegg.com

HERRENCHIEMSEE FESTIVAL July 17-29

Seventy kilometres west of Munich lies Herreninsel Island, home to Herrenchiemsee Palace and the festival which takes its name. This year's theme, 'The Music of Words', explores the relationship between literature and music. Works to be performed include Monteverdi's Orfeo by the Taverner Choir, Consort and Players directed by Andrew Parrott, and Brahms's German Requiem with Sinfonia Varsovia and the Tölz Boys' Choir. There are also podium appearances from Heinrich Schiff and Thomas Zehetmair, and a performance from the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

herrenchiemsee-festspiele.de

INCONTRI IN TERRA DI SIENA July 20-29

The 24th edition of this Tuscan-based festival pays tribute to writer Iris Origo with a song-cycle commission called The Land to Life Again by Italian composer Francesco Cilluffo. La Foce Estate and the historic castles and churches of the Val d'Orcia also play



FOCUS ON... GHENT FLANDERS FESTIVAL

The Ghent Flanders Festival launches its 55th instalment with OdeGand, a grand opening event taking place on and alongside Ghent's beautiful canals. In total, the festival includes 180 concerts performed by more than 1500 artists. The line-up this year includes Andreas Scholl, The King's Consort, the Swedish Radio Choir and Spira mirabilis. In excess of 50,000 people visit each season for events musical including the cycling tour 'Avanti!' and the Venetian Ball. gentfestival.be

host to chamber performances from tenor Ian Bostridge and pianist Julius Drake, the Borromeo String Quartet, and an eclectic collaboration between Ukranian-Jewish instrumentalists Klezmerata Fiorentina and jazz guitar legend Kenny Burrell. itslafoce.org

INDIAN SUMMER IN LEVOČA

September 28 - October 4

September 15-29

Set in a medieval Slovakian town, the festival celebrates its fifth birthday with chamber and orchestral performances. There are performances from the Stamic and Bartók Quartets, and pianist Jonathan Powell in Albéniz's Iberia. There is also an appearance from the Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra with piano soloist Eldar Nebolsin. Iblfestival.eu

INNSBRUCK FESTIVAL OF EARLY MUSIC

August 8-26

Artistic director Alessandro De Marchi examines the influence of popular traditional music of the Baroque period on compositions of the time. There are three operas on the bill: Provenzale's La Stellidaura vendicante, Monteverdi's L'incoronazione di Poppea, and Bontempi's II Paride with L'Arpeggiata directed by Christina Pluhar. On the concert programme are semi-staged performances of Scarlatti's La Dirindina, and Scottish, Slavic and Chinese works. altemusik.at

KBC MUSIC IN GREAT IRISH HOUSES

June 12-17

The festival's 42nd season presents

concerts in Castletown House in Kildare, Killruddery House in Wicklow and Rathfarnham Castle in Dublin. On the programme are the Elias Quartet, guitarist Xuefei Yang, pianist Finghin Collins, cellist Guy Johnston and the Doric Quartet. In addition, the Colin Currie Group make their festival debut with Steve Reich's Drumming. musicgreatirishhouses.com

LOFOTEN INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL July 9-14

Under the artistic direction of violinist Arvid Engegård, this Norwegian festival features performances from the Engegård and Signum Quartets, the Nash Ensemble, pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and cellist Paul Watkins. Venues include a number of intimate villages churches, and the Lofoten Cathedral and Concert Hall.

lofotenfestival.com

LUCERNE SUMMER FESTIVAL

August 8 - September 15

This season Lucerne explores the relationship between music and faith - from Mendelssohn's Reformation Symphony to Schoenberg's opera Moses und Aron. Artist-in-residence Andris Nelsons conducts Mahler's Resurrection Symphony, and Claudio Abbado and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra perform Mahler's Eighth Symphony. There are also appearances from the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics and the Royal Concertgebouw. The composer-inresidence is Sofia Gubaidulina. lucernefestival.ch

LYRIQUE-EN-MER FESTIVAL July 20 - August 17

Citadelle Vauban on Belle-Île-en-Mer in Brittany plays host to three largescale works - Verdi's Otello, Rossini's La Cenerentola and Puccini's Messa di Gloria. There are also the everpopular cocktail and 'Pic Nic' concerts featuring artists in extracts from the main repertoire and additional arias - with the opportunity to chat with performers over a glass of bubbly. helle-ile net

MORITZBURG FESTIVAL

August 5-19

Moritzburg Castle, set in the Saxon countryside, is home to this celebration of chamber music, which in 2012 focuses on French music. Under the direction of cellist Jan Vogler, the season welcomes Daniel Müller-Schott. Lise de la Salle and Jörg Widmann, and showcases student performers. moritzburgfestival.de

MUNICH OPERA FESTIVAL

June 29 - July 31

Munich Opera presents successive evenings of opera, ballet and concerts in the National Theatre, plus free performances in the Max-Joseph-Platz. There is a complete Ring cycle conducted by Kent Nagano, starring Stephen Gould, Nina Stemme and Klaus Florian Vogt, and productions of Rossini's La Cenerentola starring Joyce DiDonato, Puccini's La bohème starring Angela Gheorghiu, and Offenbach's Les contes d'Hoffmann with Diana Damrau and Rolando Villazón. A series of song recitals offers the chance to see the big names, including Christian Gerhaher, Simon Keenlyside and Jonas Kaufmann, in a more intimate setting. staatsoper.de

MUSICA REALE

July 12-18

Held in Montalcino and at Villa di Geggiano near Siena, this festival features prominent performers from the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in chamber ensembles of varying size. musica-reale.com

NEW ROSS PIANO FESTIVAL September 27-30

A celebration of all things keyboard, this Irish event features three main festival artists - Cleveland Piano Competition winner Martina Filiak, the Storioni Piano Trio and festival artistic director Finghin Collins. There are also appearances from the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and solo recitals from Dimitri Papadimitriou and Fergus Sheil. Plus there are 'play me' pianos in the street and supermarkets, and outreach sessions for students.

OPERA DAYS ROTTERDAM

May 25 - June 3

'Dream and Deed' is the theme of this year's festival, which welcomes Magdalena Kožená as special guest artist. The mezzo-soprano gives a song recital and performs the title-role in Ravel's L'enfant et les sortilèges with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin. There are appearances, too, from soprano Miah Persson, mezzo Christianne Stotijn and tenor Werner Güra in Brahms's Liebeslieder-Walzer, and performances of Glass's Les enfants terribles and Jonathan Harvey's The Summer Cloud's Awakening. The festival also hosts late-night performances and debates in the Rotterdam Schouwburg. operadagenrotterdam.nl

ORPHEUS AND BACCHUS, **BORDEAUX**

May 19-26; June 30 - July 6; September 1-8

Bordeaux's famous wine region hosts three festivals. The first is dedicated to the music of Hummel and features the three rarely heard piano concertos, the piano trios performed by the Gould Trio, the Missa solemnis and the first complete performance since 1812 of the ballet Sappho. July plays host to the Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra, and September includes concerts with Sinfonia d'Amici. orpheusandbacchus.com

PRAGUE SPRING FESTIVAL May 12 - June 3

After a five-year absence, the Czech Philharmonic returns to open the 67th season with the traditional performance of Smetana's Má vlast, conducted by Vasily Petrenko. There are also appearances from the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Daniel Barenboim, violinist Julia Fischer and the St Petersburg Philharmonic, the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek with mezzo Bernarda Fink, and pianist Leif Ove Andsnes with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. More intimate performances form an integral part of the programme, too, with recitals from mezzo Magdalena Kožená and pianist Mitsuko Uchida, and cellist Natalia Gutman and pianist Elisso Virsaladze. festival.cz

PROGETTO MARTHA ARGERICH. **LUGANO**

June 6-28

The 11th Martha Argerich Project invites some 50 talented young musicians and renowned artists to join the celebrated pianist in duos and chamber ensembles, and the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana in larger-scale works. This year's theme is 'fil rouge',









EUROPE FESTIVALS

examining pieces based on composers' reworkings of their colleagues' themes – a particular highlight will be a performance of Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn*, played as a duet by Martha Argerich and Nicholas Angelich. Also appearing are pianist Stephen Kovacevich, violinists Renaud Capuçon and Ilya Gringolts, and cellists Mischa Maisky and Gautier Capuçon. In addition there are two masterclasses – one for young Argentinian pianists and one for violinists, led by Ivry Gitlis. **rsi.ch/argerich**

RHEINGAU MUSIK FESTIVAL

June 23 - September 1

This mammoth German festival, held in the region between Wiesbaden and Lorch, opens with Carl Orff's ever-popular Carmina Burana with the hr-Sinfonieorchester conducted by Paavo Järvi. Also on the agenda are the San Francisco Symphony with pianist Lars Voqt; violinist Lisa Batiashvili and cellist Truls Mørk in Brahms's Double Concerto: pianist Lise de la Salle with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under Jakub Hrůša; pianist Nelson Freire with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra under Marin Alsop; trumpeter Tine Thing Helseth with the Bergen Philharmonic conducted by Andrew Litton; and pianist Emanuel Ax with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Plus there are duo recitals from cellist Alban Gerhardt and pianist Steven Osborne, and violinist Isabelle Faust and pianist Alexander Melnikov. rheingau-musik-festival.de

SALZBURG FESTIVAL

July 20 - September 2

Mozart's celebrated city plays host to several of his operas, including Die Zauberflöte performed on period instruments by Concentus Musicus Wien under Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and the lesser-known // re pastore. starring Rolando Villazón and conducted by William Christie. There are also stagings of Strauss's Ariadne auf Naxos conducted by Riccardo Chailly. Zimmermann's Die Soldaten under Ingo Metzmacher, Puccini's La bohème starring Anna Netrebko under Daniele Gatti, and Bizet's Carmen starring Magdalena Kožená and Jonas Kaufmann under Sir Simon Rattle. On the concert stage, 'Ouverture Spirituelle', a new mini-season, juxtaposes sacred works by Catholic and Protestant composers with those

from another religion: 2012 explores the Jewish faith with three concerts from the Israel Philharmonic programmed alongside Haydn's *The Creation* conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* under Valery Gergiev and Berlioz's *Messe solennelle* under Riccardo Muti. salzburgfestival.at

SAVONLINNA OPERA FESTIVAL July 5 - August 4

In celebration of this Finnish festival's 100th anniversary, two operas are premiered on the Olavinlinna Castle Stage: Kimmo Hakola's La Fenice, offering a new slant on the Italian opera buffa tradition, and Free Will. created by the Opera by You online community. The festival also presents the three most successful productions of its history - Die Zauberflöte, Der fliegende Holländer and Aida - and welcomes Norwegian Opera to perform Britten's Peter Grimes. There is also a gala concert, appearances from Apocalyptica Cellos and Karita Mattila, an International Singing Competition and a Fringe Festival.

operafestival.fi

SCHUBERTIADE SCHWARZENBERG

June 16-25; August 27 - September 9

Schubert is the inspiration for this Austrian festival of song and chamber music, which takes place in the picturesque Bregenz forest region. This year's artists include Paul Lewis, Ian Bostridge, Julius Drake, Cuarteto Casals, Belcea Quartet, Maxim Rysanov, Sol Gabetta, Angelika Kirchschlager and Renaud Capuçon. Besides works by Schubert, there are also performances of Bach, Rachmaninov, Brahms, Beethoven, Schumann, Haydn, Handel, Strauss and Schoenberg.

STRESA FESTIVAL

July 20 - September 8

The Stresa Festival, with its beautiful setting by Lake Maggiore in Italy, features an impressive line-up of artists for its 51st season. The festival's music director is Gianandrea Noseda, who leads the European Union Youth Orchestra and pianist Garrick Ohlsson in a programme of Tchaikovsky, Debussy and Respighi. Also appearing are Emanuel Ax, who plays Brahms's Piano Concerto No 1 with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe under Vladimir Jurowski; cellist Mischa Maisky and



The Stresa Festival enjoys a breathtaking setting by Lake Maggiore, Italy

his pianist daughter Lily; Khatia Buniatishvili, who plays Schumann's Piano Concerto under Paavo Järvi; and violinist Alina Ibragimova, who plays Bach's complete Solo Sonatas and Partitas. The festival also presents Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, a semistaged performance by young singers from the Stresa Musical Academy. stresafestival.eu

TRASIMENO MUSIC FESTIVAL June 30 - July 6

Angela Hewitt's music festival by Lake Trasimeno, Italy, is now in its eighth year, with concerts taking place in the Castle of the Knights of Malta in Magione and the towns of Perugia and Gubbio nearby. The festival opens and closes with recitals of Bach and Beethoven, and Couperin, Brahms, Debussy and Fauré respectively, both given by the acclaimed pianist herself. Other artists appearing include mezzosoprano Anne Sofie von Otter, the Quartetto di Cremona, the Australian String Quartet, and the Orchestra della Toscana conducted by Gérard Korsten. trasimenomusicfestival.com

VERBIER FESTIVAL

July 20 - August 5

This festival, set against the idyllic backdrop of the Swiss Alps, features big-name musicians as well as the superb training orchestra, the Verbier Festival Orchestra, under the baton of music director Charles Dutoit, as well as recitals, public masterclasses and films. Distinguished musicians appearing with the orchestra in the Tent this year include Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, Lawrence Power, Mischa Maisky, Martin Fröst, Simone Dinnerstein, Willard White,

Magdalena Kožená and Daniel Hope.
In the more intimate setting of Verbier's
Eglise, recitals are given by Kate Royal
with Malcolm Martineau and Denis
Matsuev with Anoushka Shankar.
verbierfestival.com

VERONA OPERA FESTIVAL

June 22 - September 2

The festival hosted in the magnificent Arena in the historic Italian city marks its 90th birthday this year with six spectacular productions of popular operas. The season opens with Mozart's Don Giovanni, followed by Verdi's Aida, Bizet's Carmen, Gounod's Roméo et Juliette, and Puccini's Tosca and Turandot. arena.it

WEST CORK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 29 - July 7

This is the 17th year of this chamber music festival, held in Bantry House on the shores of Bantry Bay. Artists appearing this season include violinist Alina Ibragimova, who leads the period-instrument Chiaroscuro Quartet. Natalie Clein, who plays Bach's Solo Cello Suites, Tanja Becker-Bender, who performs the complete Paganini Caprices, as well as up-and-coming young soprano Ruby Hughes, who sings Copland's Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson with Julius Drake. Chamber groups include the Signum Quartet and the Polish quartet Apollon Musagète, as well as homegrown talents the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the RTÉ Vanbrugh Quartet. There will also be a late-night marimba extravaganza and numerous public masterclasses. westcorkmusic.ie



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soprano Lara Hall violin Hege Høisæter mezzo-soprano

Chronis Koutsoumpidis

guitar John Lidal piano Eimear McGeown flute Marko Pop-Ristov violin Viktor Stenhjem violin Beata Söderberg

violoncello
James Tennant violoncello
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www.casadeimezzofestival.com

Tilford Bach Society

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Friday, 25th May 8pm The Great Hall, Farnham Castle Bach's Musical Offering **London Handel Players** Director Adrian Butterfield

Saturday, 26th May 12 noon All Saints' Church, Tilford Choir of the Theatre of Early Music **Director Daniel Taylor**

Saturday, 26th May 8pm All Saints' Church, Tilford The London Mozart Players Bach's Brandenberg Concerto No 3 Director Adrian Butterfield

Sunday, 27th May June 7pm All Saints' Church, Tilford Bach's St John's Passion London Handel Orchestra and Soloists Director Adrian Butterfield

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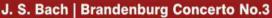
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NORTH AMERICA FESTIVALS



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ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL

June 28 - August 19

The theme for this year's eight-week celebration in the mountains of Colorado is 'Made in America', with more than 800 student and professional musicians participating in 300 events. Robert Spano takes up the reins as music director, and opens proceedings with 'A Gershwin Celebration', featuring pianist Marc-André Hamelin. Aspen's Opera Theater presents Mozart's The Magic Flute, Stephen Sondheim's Sweeney Todd and John Harbison's The Great Gatsby. Guest artists include Nicholas McGegan, Osmo Vänskä, Joshua Bell, Jonathan Biss, Stephen Hough and Nathan Gunn; the composer-inresidence is Augusta Read Thomas. aspenmusicfestival.com

BARD SUMMERSCAPE, NEW YORK

July 6 - August 19

This seven-week festival in Hudson Valley presents an eclectic mix of opera, music, theatre, dance and film, as well as cabaret held in the ever-popular Spiegeltent, At the heart of events is the 23rd Bard Music Festival, which this year takes the theme 'Saint-Saëns and His World' as the starting point for a two-weekend exploration of the French composer's music, life and times. The American Symphony

Orchestra and music director Leon Botstein are festival residents. **fishercenter.bard.edu**

BLOSSOM FESTIVAL, CLEVELAND

July 3 - September 2

Ohio's Blossom Music Center has been the summer home of the Cleveland Orchestra for 44 years, and the orchestra opens its festival over the Independence Day weekend with 'America the Beautiful' conducted by Jahia Ling. Other highlights include the return of violinist Gil Shaham, Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West Side Story conducted by Bramwell Tovey, and an 80th birthday tribute to composer John Williams, led by Richard Kaufman. Several exciting pianists are showcased, including Emanuel Ax, Tchaikovsky Competition-winner Daniil Trifonov, who makes his festival debut, and Yuja Wang.

clevelandorchestra.com

CARAMOOR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

June 23 - August 8

The Caramoor Estate in Westchester County has been hosting an international summer festival since 1945. The resident Orchestra of St Luke's opens events with Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* music and the Violin Concerto featuring Gil Shaham. Later, pianist

Emanuel Ax joins the orchestra under new principal conductor Pablo Heras-Casado. As part of the 'Bel Canto' series, there is the American premiere of Rossini's *Ciro in Babilonia* and Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, and there is chamber music from the Pacifica Quartet and family concerts, too.

caramoor.org

COLORADO MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 23 - August 3

This festival at Boulder's Chautaugua Auditorium features plenty of big names in its 36th season. Simone Dinnerstein headlines the opening concert performing Beethoven with the festival chamber orchestra and music director Michael Christie. Also appearing is actor F Murray Abraham, who narrates an evening devoted to Mozart and Salieri as part of the 'Magnificent Mozart Mini-Festival', which also includes the composer's Jupiter Symphony and Requiem. Also programmed are Mahler's Symphony No 7 and the Brandenburg Concertos.

comusic.org

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA

July 7 - August 25

Glimmerglass gives visitors the opportunity to experience top-quality opera in a beautiful lakeside setting in Otsego County, New York. 2012 features three productions: Verdi's

Aida, Lully's Armide and Weill/ Anderson's Lost in the Stars, as well as Meredith Willson's Broadway hit The Music Man. There are also recitals by Deborah Voigt and bass-baritone Eric Owens.

glimmerglass.org

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GRAND TETON MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 5 - August 18

Alongside the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra and music director Donald Runnicles, star names appearing this summer include pianist Stephen Hough in Rachmaninov with conductor Mark Wigglesworth, percussionist Colin Currie in MacMillan, and violinist James Ehnes who plays Sibelius's Violin Concerto. Also appearing over the seven weeks are the Chicago and San Francisco symphonies, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and New York Philharmonic.

GREEN MOUNTAIN OPERA FESTIVAL

June 3-24

Set in Vermont's Mad River Valley, the festival marks its seventh season with a three-week programme of open rehearsals, masterclasses and concerts. The two fully staged operas are Puccini's *La bohème*, and Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, which features singers from the Emerging Artist Program.

greenmountainoperafestival.com

JUNE IN BUFFALO

June 4-10

A collaboration between the University of Buffalo and the Robert and Carol Morris Center for 21st Century Music, June in Buffalo is dedicated to composers, and offers an intensive schedule of seminars, lectures, workshops and concerts. This year's senior faculty members are Louis Andriessen, Robert Beaser, David Felder, Fred Lerdahl and Steven Stucky; resident ensembles include the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Interface, and Genkin Philharmonic. music.buffalo.edu/juneinbuffalo

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

July 5 - August 5

John Adams appears at the New York festival to conduct members of the



FOCUS ON... FESTIVAL DEL SOL, CALIFORNIA

July 13-22
the senses'

California's spectacular Napa Valley hosts this 10-day 'feast for the senses' every summer. Alongside world-class music and dance, guests have the opportunity to sample fine wines and gourmet cuisine in Napa's beautiful historic buildings and wineries. Some of the star names appearing in 2012 include violinist Joshua Bell, mezzo-soprano Susan Graham, who sings Handel with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra under Nicholas McGegan, soprano Danielle de Niese, who performs with the Russian National Orchestra, baritone Nathan Gunn, cellist Nina Kotova, guitarist Angel Romero, pianist Hélène Grimaud and the famed Bolshoi Ballet. festivaldelsole.org

Juilliard Orchestra and London's Royal Academy Orchestra with soloist Imogen Cooper. There's also the chance to hear Kaija Saariaho's one-woman opera *Emilie*, starring soprano Elizabeth Futral. Plus the visiting Paris Opera Ballet performs *Orpheus and Eurydice* to Gluck's music and Pina Bausch's choreography, in which some of the dancers double as aria singers.

MARLBORO MUSIC SCHOOL AND FESTIVAL, VERMONT

July 14 - August 12

This musical retreat in southern Vermont is an opportunity for budding artists to collaborate with established professionals on chamber masterworks. Under the guidance of artistic directors Richard Goode and Mitsuko Uchida, and participating artists Jonathan Biss and Viviane Hagner, musicians take part in three weeks of rehearsals before presenting five weekends of public concerts.

MOSTLY MOZART

August 2-27

These days, it's not just Mozart's music at the second of Lincoln Center's summer festivals; period ensembles, lectures, films, opera and dance all make a contribution. Louis Langrée celebrates a decade as music director of the Festival Orchestra and leads nine concerts,

including the opening-night gala, with Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Nelson Freire. Langrée also conducts Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Joshua Bell and Martin Fröst. Yannick Nézet-Seguin conducts the Chamber Orchestra of Europe with Lisa Batiashvili, and artists-in-residence, the International Contemporary Ensemble, focus on the music of Messiaen.

MUSIC@MENLO

July 20 - August 11

David Finckel and Wu Han's festival of chamber music, held in the San Francisco Bay area, celebrates its 10th anniversary and explores music's ability to nurture the mind and stir the heart. On the programme is a broad array of repertoire from Bach and Beethoven to Stravinsky and Chen Yi. Artists include clarinettist Anthony McGill, pianists Juho Pohjonen and Gilbert Kalish, violinist Jorja Fleezanis, and the Pacifica and Escher Quartets.

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL, CALIFORNIA

June 7-10

Leif Ove Andsnes is music director of the festival's 66th instalment and brings a Nordic flavour to proceedings, performing the US premiere of Bent Sørensen's Piano Concerto with the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra,

and programming works by
Hafliði Hallgrímsson, Eivind Buene
and Anders Hillborg. Other artists
participating include mezzo-soprano
Christianne Stotijn, pianist Marc-André
Hamelin and violinist Terje Tønneson.
There is also a two-day symposium
led by dean of the Juilliard School,
Ara Guzelimian.

ojaifestival.org

PULITZER CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 14-17

This chamber music event takes place in Powell Hall, St Louis, and is programmed by David Robertson. The festival celebrates a decade of the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts with Messiaen's Visions de l'Amen, Unsuk Chin's Fantaisie mécanique, Steve Reich's Clapping Music, George Crumb's Black Angels, and Frederic Rzewski's The People United Will Never Be Defeated! performed by members of the St Louis Symphony and the cutting-edge quartet So Percussion.

stlsymphony.org/pulitzerfestival2012

RAVINIA FESTIVAL

June 7 - September 9

The Chicago Symphony's festival has a stellar line-up of artists, including Midori, who plays solo Bach, guitarist Angel Romero, the Emerson and Tokyo quartets, Joshua Bell, Kiri Te Kanawa and Matthias Goerne. Philip Glass's 75th birthday is celebrated with a recital by violinist Timothy Fain and the composer himself as pianist. Chicago Symphony Pavilion concerts include Mahler under Jaap van Zweden, Brahms with Nicola Benedetti and Leonard Elschenbroich under Christoph Eschenbach, Tchaikovsky with pianist Denis Matsuev conducted by music director James Conlon, and an 85th birthday celebration for vocalist Barbara Cook. There is also a performance of Holst's The Planets and two Mozart operas: The Magic Flute and Idomeneo.

ravinia.org



Louis Langrée at Mostly Mozart

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

June 8 - July 8

San Francisco's summer opera season features three operas: John Adams's technicoloured *Nixon in China*, a company premiere, and two new productions, Verdi's rarity *Attila* and Mozart's ever-popular *The Magic Flute*, starring Nathan Gunn. **sfopera.com**

SANTA FE OPERA

June 29 - August 25

Santa Fe has five exciting operas lined up for the summer season: Puccini's *Tosca* featuring Amanda Echalaz as the doomed diva and Thomas Hampson as lust-driven Scarpia, Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*, with Nicole Cabell, Rossini rarity *Maometto II*, with Luca Pisaroni in the title-role, Szymanowski's *King Roger* and Strauss's *Arabella* starring Erin Wall. santafeopera.org

SPOLETO FESTIVAL

May 25 - June 10

This three-week festival of music, dance and theatre takes place in Charleston, South Carolina, and is the sister event to Spoleto, Italy. Musical highlights include Herbert Howells's Requiem with the Westminster Choir, and the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra in Stravinsky's Petrushka. Contemporary series 'Music In Time' includes the US premieres of chamber works by Japanese composers, and a conversation with Philip Glass. Glass's opera Kepler receives its US premiere as part of the opera programme, which also features Guo Wenjing's Feng Yi Ting. spoletousa.org

BRAVO! VAIL VALLEY MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 25 - August 4

Held in the heart of Colorado's Rockies, the festival celebrates both its 25th anniversary and the second year of pianist Anne-Marie McDermott's artistic directorship. Three main orchestras make appearances: the New York Philharmonic, returning under music director Alan Gilbert for its 10th summer; the Philadelphia Orchestra. whose new music director Yannick Nézet-Séguin makes his festival debut; and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Jaap van Zweden. Programme strands include a focus on Brahms, Mendelssohn and Gershwin and numerous premieres. Artists of note include conductors Stéphane Denève and Bramwell Tovey, pianists Yefim Bronfman and Benjamin Grosvenor, violinist James Ehnes and cellist Alisa Weilerstein. vailmusicfestival.org



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CELEBRATING 75 YEARS AT TANGLEWOOD

Jeffrey Gantz, a Tanglewood regular, anticipates an exceptional programme that both embraces history and looks to the future



Dohnányi conducts Arabella Steinbacher in 2010



Dohnányi and cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 2011

Even when the Tanglewood Music Festival isn't celebrating its 75th anniversary, the Tanglewood Music Center is a magical place. Nestled in the Berkshire Hills, the Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer home in western Massachusetts comprises 210 acres of meadow housing the Serge Koussevitzky Music Shed, the smaller Seiji Ozawa Hall, the Aaron Copland Library, a theatre and a chamber music hall, all of which attract more than 350,000 visitors every summer. The students of the TMC (whose alumni include Bernstein, Abbado and Tilson Thomas) work with BSO members and guest artists to present their own concerts. There's a 'pre-season' in late June and early July, right before opening night, that this year will bring in artists including the Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma, the Mark Morris Dance Group and the Emerson String Quartet. From August 9-13, there's the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, and it all ends with the Tanglewood Jazz Festival on the first weekend of September.

Nature is never far away. In 2004, bears were seen outside my bed-and-breakfast. On opening night in 2007, James Levine's performance of Tchaikovsky's Fourth was accompanied by thunder and lightning, the flashes clearly visible from both the Shed and the surrounding lawn. When the weather is pleasant, you can buy inexpensive lawn tickets and picnic on the grass.

In the absence of a BSO music director (Levine stepped down last year for health reasons), responsibility for Tanglewood's 75th-anniversary season devolved upon BSO artistic administrator Anthony Fogg. 'A lot of it just fell into place as a matter of course,' he says. 'We wanted to reflect the historic dimension of the Tanglewood festival, as well as looking forward to the future.'

Thus this year's opening night on July 6, conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi, will reprise the programme of the very first Tanglewood concert under a tent on August 5,

1937: Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No 3 and his Symphonies Nos 5 and 6. There's also a duplication, on July 21, of the famous Wagner concert of August 12, 1937, whose disruption by a thunderstorm led to the construction of the Music Shed. 'It was truncated back then,' recalls Fogg, 'so we're testing the fates to see whether we can actually get through it!'

There will also be performances of works that have been constants over the past 75 years; Fogg mentions Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* and *Symphonie fantastique* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*. Several conductors who came through the TMC programme will be returning, among them Lorin Maazel and Charles Dutoit.

And, of course, Dohnányi. He had left Munich and was studying at Florida State University when he won a scholarship to Tanglewood in 1952. 'I was there as a conducting student with Seymour Lipkin,' he recalls, 'and also Leonard Bernstein was around then. I loved Tanglewood in those days, and I love it nowadays. It's one of the best summer festivals I know, beautiful and not snobby. People work together and the orchestra is great.'

He's been a regular Tanglewood visitor since, but this summer he's doing more than the usual single concert. 'This time I'm doing three, plus I'm part of "Tanglewood on Parade". I even cancelled Salzburg because I wanted to be in Tanglewood.'

In addition to traditional programming, the 2012 season also features eight anniversary commissions by André Previn, Michael Gandolfi, John Harbison, Gunther Schuller and others. 'Typically we don't do a lot of brand-new works

'Here, nature is never far away. In 2007, James Levine conducted Tchaikovsky's Fourth accompanied by thunder and flashes of lightning'

in the orchestra programmes at Tanglewood because we don't have sufficient rehearsal time,' Fogg points out. 'So these commissions are, we hope, some indication of our commitment to the language of today and the voices of the future.'

Of the two gala concerts, the Tanglewood 75th Anniversary Celebration on July 14 features Emanuel Ax, Yo-Yo Ma and Anne-Sophie Mutter performing with the TMC Orchestra, and the BSO playing Ravel's *La valse* and Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*. For John Williams's 80th-birthday fête, on August 18, the programme will focus on Williams's own compositions with musical guests including Leonard Slatkin and Jessye Norman.

But will Williams have to work on his 80th birthday? 'John is going to be purely the honouree on that occasion,' says Fogg. 'We have some distinguished friends of John who will be performing, and a few surprises. But it's going to be a great night. John could have celebrated his birthday just about anywhere in the world, but we're very honoured that he chose Tanglewood.'

tanglewood.org

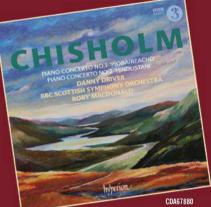
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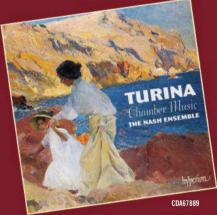


JOAQUÍN TURINA

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The Nash Ensemble performs the captivating chamber works of Joaquín Turina, whose music intriguingly blends the sensuality of Andalucian folk melody and rhythm with 20th-century French sophistication gleaned from his studies in Paris.

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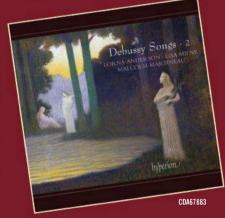


CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Songs - 2

Acclaimed sopranos, and frequent Hyperion guest artists, Lorna Anderson and Lisa Milne, both praised for their masterful interpretations of French music, join Malcolm Martineau for his second volume of Debussy's sensual, impressionistic songs.

LORNA ANDERSON soprano LISA MILNE soprano MALCOLM MARTINEAU piano





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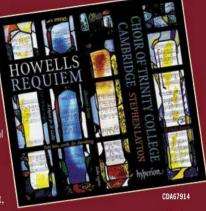


HERBERT HOWELLS

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CDD22072

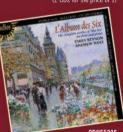


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GRAMOPHONE Reviews

May 2012





Andrei Korobeinikov and the Lahti Symphony Orchestra play Shostakovich ▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 83

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GRAMOPHONE Reviewers



Guv Rickards

I first caught the music bug in my early teens and have been following its siren call for 40 years. The finale of Sibelius's Fifth first opened my ears, a debt I later repaid with a biographical study of the Finn, but the decisive experience was Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey – particularly hearing the LP soundtrack and realising with astonishment that the sounds accompanying the apes' encounter with the monolith were music - the 'Dies irae' from Ligeti's Requiem.

From that moment, music has wafted me through a thousand years of creativity, from Hildegard of Bingen to Kalevi Aho. I have been privileged to meet some remarkable composers,

including Glanert, Holmboe, Simpson, Nordheim, McCabe, Englund, Rautavaara, Heininen, Pickard, Truscott and Hans Werner Henze (he the subject of my collective biography with Hindemith and Hartmann).

I am grateful for Gramophone's pandering to my restless exploration of modern repertoire for 20 years, lately ranging from more than 100 recordings of the Bachianas Brasileiras and Nørgård's violin concertos (BIS) to Finn Mortensen's wonderful symphony and Ragnhild Hemsing's stunning recital 'Yr' (both on Simax). And all this to a backdrop of Haydn symphonies -I have currently reached No 86.

Andrew Achenbach Nalen Anthoni Mike Ashman Philip Clark Rob Cowan' Justin Davidson Jeremy Dibble Peter Dickinson Jed Distler **Duncan Druce** Adrian Edwards Richard Fairman David Fallows **David Fanning** lain Fenlon Fabrice Fitch Jonathan

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PHOTOGRAPHY: TEEMU KIRJONEN

Recording of the Month





He has little inclination to bathe the passagework in an impressionistic haze as many do, choosing to emphasise the virtuosity of the writing'

Rafał Blechacz's fourth DG recording has revelations aplenty for Jeremy Nicholas

Debussy · Szymanowski

Debussy Pour le piano. Estampes. L'isle joyeuse **Szymanowski** Prelude and Fugue.

Piano Sonata No 1, Op 8

Rafał Blechacz pf

DG (F) 477 9548GH (62' • DDD)

I thought this was going to be a disc of two halves. In fact, it is more of a continuous journey - and a most rewarding, artfully conceived one it is, too. Rafał Blechacz shot to prominence when he won all five first prizes at the 15th Frédéric Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw in 2005. Six months before that event, he had recorded some Debussy (Suite bergamasque) and Szymanowski (Variations, Op 3), two further composers with whom he clearly has an innate affinity. Such empathy is reinforced by this, his fourth recording for DG, with which he has been since 2006 (he's only the second Polish artist after Krystian Zimerman to be signed by the label).

All are relatively early works, and composed within the first decade of the 20th century. I love Blechacz's crisp articulation and lightly pedalled bustle in the outer movements of *Pour le piano* (an arresting, impetuous opening to the 'Prélude' and wonderful *jeu perlé* in its final page). He

has little inclination to bathe the passagework in an impressionistic haze, as many players do ('Prélude', 'Sarabande' and 'Toccata', the titles of the three movements, are, after all, formal classical titles and not those of tonepoems), choosing to emphasise the virtuosity of the writing and reminding us how much Debussy learnt from Liszt. No less, but for different reasons, did I enjoy Estampes, written just two years later (1903) but occupying a very different sound world. Here the piano becomes a painter evoking places and events, and Blechacz reacts accordingly with playing of beguiling, warm sensuality (try 'La soirée dans Grenade'), preferable to my ears to the chilly objectivity of Michelangeli, paradoxically one of Blechacz's idols. 'Jardins sous la pluie' is truly net et vif with some hailstones in the downpour. The blazing end of L'isle joyeuse leads us, after a pause, quietly, naturally, into the parallel sound world of Szymanowski.

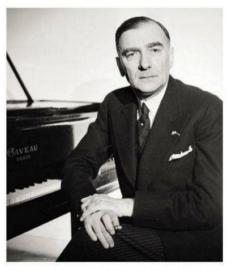
I'm sure it's coincidence that both works chosen by Blechacz featured in competitions: the Prelude (1909) and (four-voice) Fugue (1905) in C sharp minor won second prize in a 1909 competition sponsored by the Berlin musical journal *Signale für die Musikalische Welt* (the Prelude was added specifically

for the occasion). Busoni, who was on the jury, mistook it, bizarrely, for a work by Schoenberg (he was quickly disabused by the latter); to my ears there is more than a hint of Scriabin and the labyrinthine counterpoint of Reger in its classically inspired textures. Slight and unrepresentative of Szymanowski's later style though it may be, it is an attractive short work and beautifully played.

A full 20 seconds of silence follow before the early Sonata in C minor, Op 8, where the influences of Chopin, Scriabin, Richard Strauss and others are more obvious. This was Szymanowski's first big cyclic work, written between 1903 and 1904 while he was studying with Zygmunt Noskowski, and which subsequently in 1910 received first prize in a competition organised by the Chopin Centenary Committee at Lwów. Once championed by Szymanowski's friend Arthur Rubinstein, but by too few pianists since, it is a strikingly effective recital piece. Its four movements last over 25 minutes, beginning with an Allegro moderato that clearly takes its lead from Chopin. An emotionally charged Adagio is followed by a look back to earlier times with a Minuet. One can sense Szymanowksi's growing sense of confidence as the work progresses: the final



Piano as painter: Rafał Blechacz in Debussy's Estampes



'Championed by too few': Szymanowski's First Sonata

movement has a portentous introduction succeeded by an impressive three-voice fugue. This works to a thrilling climax before a somewhat overwrought coda.

Whatever its shortcomings, it's a better work than Chopin's C minor Sonata and, though it lacks memorable themes, is far less daunting (to hear and to play) than either Szymanowski's Second or Third Sonata.

Of the few alternatives available of Op 8, the recording by Raymond Clarke (Divine Art, 9/99) is spoken of highly but I have heard only Martin Roscoe's (Naxos, 10/00) and Martin Jones's (Nimbus, 9/94). Blechacz's has the edge on them as much for his fierce emotional engagement with the music as for the superior sound quality.

Szymanowski's music has never courted popularity with the public and his name is not one that sells records. The Sonata is the kind of work that needs a pianist of Blechacz's high profile and stylistic authority to bring it to the forefront, to play it in concert and to establish it as part of the repertoire. So full marks to DG for backing its young star, and fingers crossed that his performance may provide an accessible and rewarding entrance point to those wanting to investigate Szymanowski in the year that we mark the 75th anniversary of his death.

My one complaint about this outstanding issue is DG's dismal booklet and presentation. There are no background notes on the music or its composers, and little on the gifted artist who has taken the trouble to play it. If it's an attempt to be cool and modish, it doesn't work, coming across as discourteous to both artist and customer. **G**

Listening points

Your guide to the disc's memorable moments

Track 1: 'Prélude' from Pour le piano, 0'00"

Blechacz attacks this opening movement like few others - but exactly as Debussy instructed: non legato, assez animé et très rythmé.

Track 1: 3'00"

The 'Prélude' ends with a quasi-cadenza consisting of a series of featherlight runs in the treble, which Blechacz dispatches with miraculous evenness and fluency.

Track 4: 'Pagodes' from Estampes

Note how Blechacz now changes the sound of the piano in this depiction of the Javanese dances that Debussy heard at the Universal Exhibition of 1900. There's a particularly evocative passage from 159" to 3"10".

Track 10: Piano Sonata, Allegro moderato

After the tumultuous opening of the Sonata, Szymanowski introduces a second subject at 1'08' by the same means as Chopin did in the first movement of his B minor Sonata.

Track 11: Piano Sonata, Adagio

The way Blechacz handles this movement seems like a natural extension of his Chopin-playing.

Track 14: Piano Sonata, Fuga

The start of the fugue's recapitulation at 4'14" introduces a densely contrapuntal passage of increasing tension, lucidly voiced and dynamically graded by Blechacz.



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear an excerpt from this issue's Recording of the Month

Orchestral



Bryce Morrison reviews the BBC Philharmonic's disc of Falla:

'It is greatly to the credit of Juanjo Mena and his forces that such a potent atmosphere is achieved' • REVIEW ON PAGE 79



David Fanning reviews Melnikov's Shostakovich piano concertos:

For me, this is Shostakovich-playing on a level of inspiration I have only heard in my dreams' REVIEW ON PAGE 83

Adams

Harmonielehre^a. Short Ride in a Fast Machine^b San Francisco Symphony Orchestra / Michael Tilson Thomas

SFS Media (P) SFS0053 (47* • DDD)

Recorded live at Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco.

aDecember 2010; bSeptember 2011



Adams's mammoth orchestral essay from its first performers

John Adams's Harmonielehre has remained a somewhat enigmatic and impenetrable masterpiece in the composer's oeuvre -'a difficult birth', as he once described it. This difficult birth may have arisen from the fact that Harmonielebre wears its influences very much on its sleeve, almost as if Adams set out to exorcise the ghosts of composers past and present. The work's basic harmonic trajectory a semitonal gearshift from pounding, Brahmsian E minor chords at the beginning to an emphatic, victorious, Beethovenian E flat major at the end – sets out the pluralistic nature of the work. In between the two, Adams steers a course that appears to absorb and reject all the big European names: Mahler, Debussy, Ravel, Sibelius and, most obviously, Wagner, who forms a very tangible ghost during the second movement ('The Anfortas Wound'), and Schoenberg, for whom the work functions as a kind of dedication.

In trying to marry these influences within the context of an essentially post-minimalist style, Harmonielehre comes dangerously close to being 'all things to all people'. Adams's exorcism becomes an exercise, as the title itself suggests, and while there is no doubting the work's sheer virtuosity in stretching the orchestra's resources to its very limits, it is difficult to know whether the composer is serious, playful or both. While such ambiguities impart depth and richness, Harmonielehre also requires a very safe pair of conductor's hands to smooth out its eclectic fissures. Michael Tilson Thomas is about as safe as one could wish for. Having premiered Harmonielehre back in 1985 and played it ever since, the San Francisco Symphony has also forged an innate relationship with the work's chameleon-like character. Accompanied here by the ebullient,

high-octane orchestral fanfare *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, both live recordings serve to reinforce Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony's status as true champions of Adams's orchestral music. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

Adès · Nancarrow

VIDE

Adès In Seven Daysa

Nancarrow/Adès Studies^b - No 6; No 7 ^aNicolas Hodges, ^bRolf Hind *pfs*

a London Sinfonietta / Thomas Adès bpf
Signum (b) (2) (CD + 2 Signum (c) (CD + 2 CD) SIGCD277 (42' • DDD)
Recorded live at a Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
March 2011; b Kings Place, London, June 2011
DVD includes Thomas Adès and Tal Rosner
in conversation



London Sinfonietta with Adès's 'moving image' concerto

The London Sinfonietta's new association with Signum Classics continues with the first recording of Thomas Adès's In Seven Days. Described as a 'Piano Concerto with Moving Image', this half-hour piece is also a videoballet in seven continuous movements that evoke the Creation story in sound and vision. A sombre though translucent prelude depicts 'Chaos-Light-Dark', piano then coming to the fore in the animated 'Separation of the waters into sea and sky' and intermezzo-like 'Land-Grass-Trees'. The central 'Stars, Sun, Moon' brings the most sustained and intense music, then an elaborate (texturally at least) fugue segues 'Creatures of the Sea and Sky' and 'Creatures of the Land' in a gradual build-up to the final section, 'Contemplation'. This alludes to earlier ideas from a more tranquil perspective, albeit with a hint of the opening to suggest a sense of closure.

Evocative without being merely descriptive, *In Seven Days* is a highly cohesive work that understatedly fulfils its intention. The pianowriting is expertly integrated into the ensemble, Nicolas Hodges amply exploiting the judicious range of timbral possibilities, with the caveats that the whole feels no more than the sum of its parts, nor does the overall variation process have quite the cumulative impact its subject matter leads one to expect. Tal Rosner's video designs are a pleasure to watch as they pursue

various off-symmetrical guises: the fact that the six screens have, for DVD purposes, been reduced to a rectangular formation does not in itself limit them to a highly effective gloss on music which, when heard on CD, is no less 'complete' as a purely sonic entity.

Both formats include two of Conlon Nancarrow's Studies for player piano – the rhythmically dextrous Sixth and the fantasialike Seventh of the series – in Adès's two-piano transcriptions that bring their complexity but also playfulness into explicit focus, with Sophie Clements's discreet visuals a stylish complement. The DVD has a dialogue between Adès and Rosner, while sound and booklet-notes serve the music admirably. Whether *In Seven Days* is a harbinger of things to come or just a diverting novelty must be for each listener to decide. **Richard Whitehouse**

Beethoven · Kreisler

'Legacy'

Beethoven Violin Concerto, Op 61 Kreisler
Praeludium and Allegro (in the style of Pugnani).
Caprice viennois, Op 2. Variations on a Theme by
Corelli (in the style of Tartini). Romance: Larghetto
on a Theme by Carl Maria von Weber. Tambourin
chinois, Op 3. Liebesleid Rachmaninov/Kreisler
Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini - Var 18
David Garrett va

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra / Ion Marin
Decca ® ② (CD + 222) 476 4855 (72* • DDD)
DVD includes 'Live in Baden-Baden' and
Documentary 'Playing for my Life'



Kreisler homage from Haendel pupil Garrett

The idea of pairing the Beethoven Concerto with Fritz Kreisler's music is a fine one; Kreisler was, after all, a wonderful exponent of the Concerto and the programme brings together two sides of the great Viennese tradition. I can't say, however, that the orchestrations of Kreisler add anything to the original pieces: the grandiose quality of the *Praeludium and Allegro* is exaggerated to the point of parody; *Liebesleid* is given an unpleasant addition of schmaltz in the guise of an orchestral introduction. And, because of the big orchestral backing, there's no space for subtlety,



At home with Adams: Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony

and David Garrett often feels obliged to play too emphatically or to draw out the music excessively – *Caprice viennois* takes a whole minute longer than Kreisler's own recordings.

The Beethoven has some lovely episodes – Garrett's playing of the coda following the first-movement cadenza is spellbinding – and it's particularly well recorded; the important bass melodies 'tell' in a way that's quite rare. But here, too, Garrett shows a tendency to project too strongly; the finale's G minor episode, marked *dolce*, is a case in point. For all his vitality and spontaneity, he doesn't get to the heart of the music as Isabelle Faust and Claudio Abbado do so memorably.

The accompanying DVD has more interest than is usual with such promotional videos. There are fascinating interviews with Garrett's teachers, Ida Haendel and Itzhak Perlman, and a memorable account of the strains of being a teenage virtuoso, making clear the liberating effect of Garrett's move to crossover performance. **Duncan Druce**

Beethoven - selected comparison:

Faust, Orch Mozart, Abbado (3/11) (HARM) HMC90 2105

Beethoven

Symphony No 9, 'Choral', Op 125

Rebecca Lipinski sop Anna Grevelius mez

Peter Wedd ten Roderick Williams bass

CBSO Chorus; Manchester Camerata / Douglas Boyd

Avie ® AV2245 (65' • DDD • T/t)

Recorded live at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, January 2011



Boyd's Manchester tenure ends with a Ninth

The opening is transparent, the triplet semiquavers on second violins and cellos pianissimo but definite. Rhythmic snatches from first violins and violas that prophesy the main theme a few bars later rise out in an undertone as instructed. But there are no mysterious murmurings. Every note registers. Douglas Boyd balances the instruments with care and trusts Beethoven's metronome marking, not only in this movement but in others too. Whatever opposition there is to these directions, Beethoven's unequivocal confidence in Maelzel's instrument - which 20th-century investigation proved wasn't faulty - is also vindicated by conductors such as Riccardo Chailly and Charles Mackerras.

The Manchester Camerata isn't large – 34 strings – but has a force that the recording doesn't reproduce consistently; and occasionally cloudy sound, together with cutbacks in level, most noticeably in the reprise of the first movement and the ending of the last, compresses dramatic potency. Boyd's conducting reflects an awareness of magnitude. He doesn't plane jagged edges or reduce vehemence (the finale's recitatives, played

as required, explicitly foretell the narrative), yet finds space for the flexibility to express feeling where necessary. In addition, Beethoven believed that 'feeling has its own measure' and, heard in a compassionately discerned slow movement, phrases are shaped within the specified beats. Orchestra, soloists and chorus seem to be empowered by their conductor, who also holds his forces in fine equilibrium. Here, then, is a cohesive, powerful but unpretentious interpretation of the Ninth from a musician of high promise. Nalen Anthoni

Selected comparisons:

RLPO, Mackerras (12/91^R) (CFP) 575751-2 Leipzig Gewandhaus Orch, Chailly (A/11) (DECC) 478 3492DH

Berio



Gardner in Bergen for Berio's refractions of Romanticism

Renderings of *Rendering* (by Chailly and Eschenbach, among others) have emphasised the dislocation and distance between Schubert and Berio. Unfamiliarity with the original material on the part of orchestras, at least, has

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perhaps caused Schubert to appear at his most beery and Biedermeier, and modernist anxiety, lengthened by hindsight, has exaggerated the Mahlerian shadows over the original fragments. This is much more congenial. The basic tempi are quicker, the Bergen Philharmonic is lighter on its feet, Gardner's phrasing of the central movement a cousin to Brian Newbould's completion, and thus *Rendering*'s periodic, unpredictable descent into twilit oblivion becomes all the more touching, and may remind us of 'the sincerity' with which Berio approached 'my love letter to Schubert'.

The other two works may seem more straightforward in conception and intention, notwithstanding Berio's own introductions to the first two movements of the Brahms sonata. I can't really hear what he achieves here, or indeed why the transcription needed making at all other than as a private homage, and not at any rate on a scale that must have given the balance engineer a headache. Is it with irony or affection that his idea of a Romantic orchestra seems to grow from the inner movements of Mahler's Ninth, heavy with low wind and emphatic first-beat drum-strokes? Mahler's little 'Hans und Grete' waltzes straight into Act 2 of Der Rosenkavalier, and while Berio channels the Wunderhorn orchestration of the Second Symphony in 'Frühlingsmorgen', an alien, Straussian haze is never far away. Leaving balance issues to the engineers, Roderick Williams takes a relaxed, confiding approach, never less than suave even against the galloping rhythms of 'Scheiden und Meiden'.

Peter Quantrill

Berlioz

Symphonie fantastique, Op 14.
Béatrice et Bénédict - Overture
Scottish Chamber Orchestra / Robin Ticciati
Linn (F) . CKD400 (63' • DDD/DSD)



Ticciati with the Symphonie fantastique in Edinburgh

The way in which Robin Ticciati paces the Symphonie fantastique lends it powerful impetus. Keeping his big guns in reserve, he shapes the first movement so that the final bars reach an exciting climax, but this is an interpretation that demonstrates far more wide-ranging affinities with the music and skills of characterisation. The reveries at the start are aptly shrouded in a brooding atmosphere; the ebb and flow of dynamics, tempo and temperament as the movement progresses are handled in a masterly manner, so that the music's scenario comes vibrantly to life. The clarity, coordination and spectrum of colour in the orchestra are spot-on for Berlioz. The ear can thus readily appreciate the individuality of Berlioz's scoring, its translucency, its homing in on particular timbres and its cunning mixes. The solo

contributions are first-rate: the cor anglais in the 'Scène aux champs', for example, or the E flat clarinet in the 'Songe d'une nuit de sabbat'. But these are constituents of a broad palette of sonority that Ticciati and the orchestra draw on with the utmost discretion and, when the occasion demands, with exhilarating dramatic thrust. Contrasts between the lyrical poise and sweep of 'Un bal', the contemplation of the central movement and the emphatic 'Marche au supplice' are well drawn, and this is altogether a performance that has been thought through as an organic entity, a broad, vivid tableau in which images are sharply focused. The overture to Béatrice et Bénédict makes for a spry encore. Geoffrey Norris

Bruckner

Symphonies - No O (second version, 1869); No 1 (Linz version, 1865/66, ed Nowak, 1953) **Tapiola Sinfonietta / Mario Venzago** CPO © ② CPO777 617-2 (89' • DDD)

Bruckner

Symphony No 1 (Linz ver, 1865/66, ed Nowak, 1953) **Aachen Symphony Orchestra / Marcus Bosch**Coviello (F) ... COV31115 (46' • DDD/DSD)





Bruckner cycles continue with the early symphonies in Aachen and Espoo

In reviewing Mario Venzago's coupling of Bruckner's Fourth and Seventh symphonies (11/11), I found the brightened textures revealing and not infrequently refreshing but thought some of the interpretative ideas equivocal at best. Here, in 'Die Nullte' and the First Symphony, the element of added interpretative interest works very much to he music's advantage. Indeed, I'd say that Venzago's reading of No 0 is among the finest I've ever heard, with some especially beautiful soft playing: the pppp last minute of the Andante quite took my breath away. Dialoguing violin motifs are shaped with great sensitivity, even as early as the first movement's second subject (1'10").

One of Venzago's virtues as a Bruckner interpreter is in the way he takes on aspects of period performance practice, moderating the use of vibrato rather than taking a doctrinaire line against it, which means that both its employment and its absence have expressive effect. For example, while the passage just mentioned sports subtle vibrato to help sweeten the texture, the chorale-like subject a couple of minutes later dispenses with it almost entirely. After the *Andante* takes its last sigh, the *Scherzo* jumps in dramatically – breaking the spell somewhat, but never mind, that's obviously the intention. The Trio is almost too dreamy but the finale is excellently judged (ie Venzago's

voicing of the first pages), the Mendelssohnian scherzo-like passage at 2'17", light as thistledown. That's Venzago's way with Bruckner, bright, taut, transparent, antimonumental and viewed from a Schubertian axis. His version of the First Symphony is cast along similar lines, with an additional quota of accelerating excitement for the close of the first movement, which fires away at a terrific lick. At 10'06" the eerily quiet violins sound as if they're bowing pretty near the bridge (try from, say, 10'50"). Elsewhere, I was reminded of Dvořák and, at around 6'46" into the Andante, the Nielsen of Helios, what with the manner of the string-writing and the kind of modulations used.

Marcus Bosch's First with the Aachen Symphony, the concluding instalment of his set of the numbered symphonies - which uses the same 'Linz' version with revisions (edited by Leopold Nowak, 1953) as both Venzago and Simone Young - returns us to the kind of weighty approach already well known from various feted Brucknerians of yore, though without recourse to mannerism. His recording is roughly on a par with Young's, though more resonantly recorded and swifter by around three minutes overall (Venzago is almost two minutes swifter still). Oddly, although Venzago achieves the more Schubertian textures, it is Bosch whose approach to the *Andante* is more reminiscent of Schubertian lyricism. He cues a propulsive Scherzo and his finale is particularly imposing: the quasi-fugal writing from 7'22" builds up a good head of steam and the closing pages are very exciting. So, vive la différence! The luminous and revealing Venzago set might be described as Bruckner for non-Brucknerians. the Bosch as an admirable conclusion to a fine cycle, worthy of comparison with the best, if not quite the best. Rob Cowan

Sym No 1 – selected comparison: Hamburg PO, Young (A/11) (OEHM) OC633

Bruckner

Symphony No 9 (1894 version)

SWR Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra / Sir Roger Norrington

Hänssler Classic (P. CD93 273 (52' • DDD)
Recorded live at the Beethovensaal, Liederhalle,
Stuttgart, July 2010



Norrington's experiment arrives at the Ninth

If you can take the opening of the third-movement *Adagio*, you'll likely appreciate the rest. Up swoop the strings, then down again, both times on a violently arching *portamento*. It's striking, some will say grotesque – but to these ears it sounds applied from without rather than felt from within. As might be expected, Sir Roger employs instruments of the day, with a head-count that Bruckner might have

expected and an appropriate seating plan. Bowing, phrasing and articulation are all in keeping with the manners of period and there's the usual Norrington embargo on vibrato.

There are impressive moments such as the thunderous swell of the timpani as the first climax peaks and the painfully distended dissonance that jars as the Adagio's crowning climax screeches to a halt. The Scherzo is interesting: a pert, unhurried and precisely phrased rendition, cold and eerie, with heightened accents. Norrington claims that he's acting on 'the latest information on tempi', which helps explain the outer movements' animated course: the effect is at once stark, restless and chaste. Note the near-Baroque articulation at around 12'26" into the first movement, heading towards the great central catharsis and the unorthodox crescendodiminuendo near the close of the same passage (the movement's final moments are treated in a similar fashion). The balance tends to favour the brass at the expense of the strings, the violins especially, but then that's generally the norm with period-style performances of big Romantic works. I didn't much care for the way the horns are upstaged by the timps around the blazing fanfares in the Adagio (1'26") or the swift, throwaway handling of the passage after the lovely second subject (4'32"). Other passages also emerge as uncomfortably swift (ie at 13'30"), but if that really is what Bruckner wanted, then sampling is mandatory. I remain unconvinced, and had to smile at the serene VW-style string passage around 12'11" as played without vibrato, sounding here more than ever like the Tallis Fantasia and a postcard from home.

Excellent sound and, I suppose, good to have as food for thought, which is invariably what Norrington is all about. I'll keep it by me for a while, and recommend you do too. Have it to hand as an alternative to Wand, Walter, Giulini, Celibidache, Karajan, Furtwängler et al. See how it stacks up and report back. I've a sneaking suspicion what the answer will be, but then I could be wrong.

Rob Cowan

Dvořák

Symphony No 7, Op 70 B141. In Nature's Realm, Op 91 B168. Scherzo capriccioso, Op 66 B131. Slavonic Dance, Op 46 No 8 B83

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra / José Serebrier Warner Classics © 2564 66656-2 (72' • DDD)



Szell acolyte continues his Bournemouth Dvořák cycle

When it comes to conducting Dvořák, José Serebrier isn't afraid to get mud on his boots: he's out there in all weathers, braving the first movement's unpredictable climate (the switch from storm to sudden sunshine at around 1'17") and generally favouring the score's mellower aspects, especially where the cellos are involved (ie from 5'56" and the Poco adagio). Less volatile than Kubelík and more combustible than Alsop, he presents a strong, thick-set Dvořák Seventh, managing some skilful transitions en route, in particular the way he glides from the Scherzo's first section to its more intensely expressive Trio (at 2'30"). The finale stomps and rages, much as it should, with few mannerisms, tempo-wise (my beloved Kubelík/DG version is rather more liberal in that respect). In his bookletnote, Serebrier tells us that when he was Composer-in-Residence for the Cleveland Orchestra he spent many hours studying George Szell's marked-up parts for the Seventh and, while that influence is undeniably audible, this is no mere mirror image of a standard Szell classic. It holds its own well.

The fill-ups are variable. The boisterous Eighth Slavonic Dance carries more weight than most but because of that serves as a symphonic-sounding prelude to the main work. In Nature's Realm starts promisingly but rather loses impetus and although the Scherzo capriccioso, like the Symphony, is ruggedly energetic there are some rough edges to the playing. But the Symphony is the main draw; like its New World predecessor (1/12) in this series, it's a strong digital contender, worthy of comparison with Marin Alsop in Baltimore and Sir Charles Mackerras with the Philharmonia (both coupled with the Eighth Symphony). Warner Classics' sound quality is full-bodied and busy. Rob Cowan

Sym No 7 – selected comparisons: BPO, Kubelík (10/71^R) (DG) 477 9764GM2 Pbilb Orch, Mackerras (4/10) (SIGN) SIGCD183 Baltimore SO, Alsop (8/10) (NAXO) 8 572112

Dvořák





Cello Concerto, Op 104 B191^a. The Water Goblin, Op 107 B195. In Nature's Realm, Op 91 B168 ^aZuill Bailev VC

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra / Jun Märkl Telarc ® TEL32927-02 (76° • DDD) Recorded live at the Hilbert Circle Theatre, Indianapolis, February 2011



Virginia-born cellist with Dvořák's 'American' concerto

Dvořák wrote his masterly Cello Concerto in 1894-95, at the end of his American period, during which he was director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. He had just heard Victor Herbert's Second Cello Concerto and this overturned his previous view that the cello's upper register was not suitable for a concerto role. It arguably remains the greatest of all Romantic cello concertos – if the Elgar is viewed as a different, nostalgic and introspective piece. Until now, the

GRAMOPHONE Archive

August 1968 A fantastique special issue

Our review of Leonard Bernstein's recording of Berlioz's hallucinogenic masterpiece shortly before the NYPO's London visit

Berlioz



Symphonie fantastique, Op 14 New York Philharmonic Orchestra / Leonard Bernstein

CBS ● SPR21 (12in, 17s 6d)
Selected bargain comparisons:
Lamoureux, Markevitch
(1/62, 6/68[®]) ® 135057

Hallé, Barbirolli (6/64) M GGC4005 S GSGC14005

A freshly recorded issue from Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic at only 17s 6d is obviously tempting, and the offer – for a limited period only – is intended as a special attraction to celebrate the orchestra's visit to Europe this summer. Bernstein will be giving this very symphony with the orchestra on television – one of London Weekend Television's first cultural offerings after it starts operations – and I can imagine CBS doing very well with so timely an issue at such a price.

All the same I am genuinely sorry that it is held out as a typical example of Bernstein's work in New York, because it seems to me to play directly into the hands of his critics who dismiss him as a hard-driving extrovert. He can on occasion be so warm, sensitive and thoughtful that it is disappointing to find the frenetic side of the Fantastique played up consistently with very fast speeds which allow little delicacy of pointing and maximum surface excitement. The first movement sounds very forced, and I would far rather put up with the oddities of Markevitch's reading (reissued in June [1968] on DG's Privilege series at only a few shillings more than this). In the Waltz, Bernstein whips up the excitement from the very opening, and leaves nothing in hand for later. The waltz rhythm is sadly unlilting. The slow movement is well controlled, but the CBS recording presents the woodwind in close-up, so that the opening cor anglais is unnaturally loud. The 'March to the Scaffold' is fast, brilliant and extrovert, which again by the end pays diminishing dividends even in excitement, and the finale is lacking in the element of grotesque that is so clearly wanted. The fantastic woodwind version of the idée fixe is ridiculously harddriven with no lilt and no magic. One point in favour of the new issue is that there is no side-break splitting the slow movement, but even in this price category I would count both Barbirolli and Markevitch as clearly preferable.

Edward Greenfield August 1968

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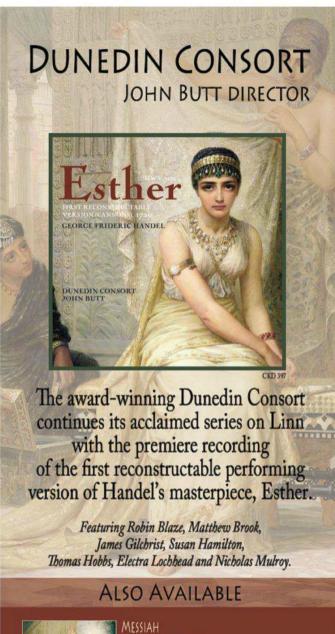


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recording to recommend was the celebrated DG version featuring the partnership of Rostropovich and Karajan, ideally coupled with Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations. But this wonderfully spontaneous new version by Zuill Bailey and Jun Märkl tends to sweep the board. It offers Telarc's very best sound and the recording, made in Hibert Circle Theatre, Indianapolis, could not be more natural or better balanced (the acoustic is obviously very sympathetic). As soon as Bailey begins the introduction the ear is aware that this is a live performance, for there is both electricity and warmth in the air; and when the principal horn, Robert Danforth, plays his richly contoured main theme with such moving poetic feeling (echoed later by the soloist), one is aware that this is very special music-making. The woodwind opening of the slow movement is exquisite and Bailey plays the gently retrospective closing section of the finale with rapt concentration, catching the composer's romantic memory of his early love for Josefina Kaunitzová (his wife's sister-in-law).

All in all this is an unforgettable performance, and the lesser-known pair of symphonic poems, the lyrical In Nature's Realm and the more sinister folk tale about The Water Goblin, are vividly played to make an excellent coupling. The narrative of the latter piece mirrors a Scottish folk tale about a 'water horse' who kidnaps a maiden and takes her down to the bottom of Loch Garve (in the Highlands), colourfully and dramatically depicted in Dvořák's tone-poem.

Ivan March

Vc Conc - selected comparison: Rostropovich, BPO, Karajan (3/85R, 5/95R) (DG) 447 413-2GOR

Falla

'Works for Stage and Concert Hall' El sombrero de tres picos^a. Noches en los jardines de España^b. Homenajes ^aRaquel Lojendio sop ^bJean-Efflam Bavouzet pf BBC Philharmonic Orchestra / Juanjo Mena Chandos (F) CHAN10694 (77' • DDD)



Spanish fare from the BBC Phil under new chief Mena

As Chandos's informative and evocative notes tell us, we have Grieg (an unlikely source, though, like Falla, a devoted nationalist) to thank for Falla's choice of career. Enchanted by Grieg's music, he went on to become the most celebrated of all Spanish composers. And here, in this outstanding issue of works for stage and concert hall, there is a celebration of a major part of a slim but profoundly distinguished output.

Most notable is the performance of The Three-cornered Hat, which evolved from a mimed farce into a ballet of earthy and brilliant appeal, a far cry from clichéd picture-postcard Spain. And it is greatly to the credit of Juanjo Mena and his forces (with a truly authentic touch from soprano Raquel Lojendio) that such a potent atmosphere is achieved. Falla's beloved folk elements (idealised rather than actual) are given with a concentrated musicianship where energy and refinement blend in ideal proportions. Again, you sense, particularly in the final and enthralling jota, that true excitement comes not from a generalised freefor-all but from the finest focus and discipline.

Homenajes, a late work, takes us into another, elegiac world, with posthumous tributes to key influences. Falla had after all studied in Paris, and listening to 'à Claude Debussy' in particular, you recall Falla's awe when listening to the former's 'La soirée dans Grenade', music that prompted him to wish he could write music so Spanish in idiom.

Finally to Nights in the Gardens of Spain, Falla's concert-hall masterpiece, where the orchestra are joined by Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, intent on close musical integration rather than spotlit brio. Suppressing the more effervescent and Gallic side of his nature, his performance is more subdued than from celebrated champions of this score (Rubinstein, Curzon, de Larrocha and, most recently, Argerich), yet it casts its own spell, sultry and scintillating as required. Chandos's sound is of exceptional clarity and finesse. Bryce Morrison

Gershwin

Piano Concerto. Second Rhapsody. Variations on 'I got rhythm'

Orion Weiss of

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra / JoAnn Falletta Naxos American Classics © 8 559705 (59' • DDD)



G G

The 'other' rhapsody from Weiss and Falletta's Buffalo Phil

If we have to have yet another recording of Gershwin's Piano Concerto, there are things to admire in this one. Orion Weiss never engages in the kind of exaggeration which some pianists have used to define their identity and his dry rhythmic delivery is thoroughly idiomatic. It's odd that the first bass note under the opening solo doesn't sound; but the long sweep of heterogeneous material in the first movement is convincingly sustained.

In the Adagio the trumpet solo is rather square and certainly too loud but Weiss is perky and dry in the faster middle section. He is slightly slower than Donohoe and Rattle in the last movement - I have often used their recording as a benchmark - but the orchestra serves him well, with a fulsome tam-tam just before the last climax, not an apologetic ping as in some recordings.

The drably titled Second Rhapsody has always had a tough time competing with the massive

popularity of the Rhapsody in Blue. But it is exploratory Gershwin as he moves towards Porgy and Bess, with greater harmonic resource, vivid orchestration and better continuity, even if the tunes are more elusive. In the I got rhythm Variations, at times a hilarious candyfloss, taken from the musical Girl Crazy, Gershwin's imitation of out-of-tune Chinese flutes in the piano part feels slightly condescending in today's embrace of world music - but he meant well. All these pieces get snappy performances in well-balanced, clear recordings: an enjoyable collection. Peter Dickinson Pf Conc - selected comparison:

Donohoe, CBSO, Rattle (EMI) 206628-2

Gubaidulina

The Lyre of Orpheus^a. The Canticle of the Sun^b ^aKremerata Baltica / Gidon Kremer vn bNicolas Altstaedt vc bAndrei Pushkarev. Rihards Zalupe perc ^bRostislav Krimer celesta ^bRiga Chamber Choir 'Kamēr...' / Māris Sirmais ECM New Series (F) 476 4662 (69' • DDD)

Gubaidulina

In tempus praesensa. Glorious Percussionb aVadim Gluzman vn bAnders Loguin, bAnders Haag, bMika Takehara, bEirik Raude, bRobyn Schulkowsky perc Lucerne Symphony Orchestra / Jonathan Nott BIS (F) BIS-CD1752 (71' • DDD)





Personalities and deities explored in Gubaidulina from Latvia and Switzerland

Sofia Gubaidulina's music ranges wide, often beyond conventional instruments and instrumental groupings, and plunges deep, both technically and into ideas motivated by her strong religious conviction. She is now well represented on CD; these two new discs can hardly give a comprehensive view of her art but they do provide a valuable introduction to it.

And these are attractive pieces, in the obvious sense of beguiling the ear but also for their capacity to hold the attention and draw the listener into her inventive world. That is not to say that it is necessary to understand all her technical motivations. The Lyre of Orpheus, a piece for violin and orchestra vividly played by one of her principal champions, Gidon Kremer, derives from an acoustic phenomenon lucidly explained in her booklet-note. Of course, this has formulated her invention and given the piece its individual and fascinating character, but the invention is freed, rather than bound, by a technical process; and the listener need grapple with it only if curious enough. In tempus praesens is a violin concerto, with as its creative starting point, it is explained, a use of the numbers 1 and 3 deriving from the doctrine of the Trinity, but (to my ear) holding its considerable interest by a skilful and dramatic

use of certain repeated intervals. It is also a virtuoso piece, to which Vadim Gluzman responds with the enthusiasm the music invites.

The Canticle of the Sun is a stranger work, taking as its starting point Mstislav Rostropovich and what Gubaidulina calls 'his personality perpetually lit up by the sun, by sunlight, by sunny energy' (and she finds strange things for his cello to do, which no doubt the ever-exuberant Slava enjoyed). Lying behind and within this is the gentle chanting of a setting of St Francis of Assisi's canticle, scarcely 'set to music' but informing the whole nature of the work. Glorious Percussion includes substantial improvisations from an array of percussion instruments (something close to Gubaidulina's heart). These are extraordinary works from an extraordinary and very compelling musical personality. John Warrack

Haydn

'Complete Symphonies, Vol 16'
Symphonies - No 90; No 92, 'Oxford'
Heidelberg Symphony Orchestra / Thomas Fey
Hänssler Classic ® CD98 629 (61' • DDD)



Vol 16 in Fey's Haydn edition with the Heidelberg SO

Familiar feelings of anticipation and trepidation on unwrapping the latest recording from Thomas Fey quickly turned to dread on remembering Haydn's magnificent coup de théâtre in the finale of Symphony No 90. Following a characteristically involved development, the recapitulation is curtailed with a rousing, brass-laden full close, before an extended coda creeps in, pianissimo, after a four-bar silence. Fey has form for his previous heavy-handed telling of Haydn's jokes but, mirabile dictu, he plays this one pretty much straight.

Of course, many of his trademarks are in place: driving tempi in outer movements, string lines that bulge like sausages in a butcher's window, a timpanist who makes one fear for the well-being of his instruments. Strangely, No 90's first movement makes an odd break for the line at the exposition codetta (from around 2'04" and 3'42"). Nevertheless, if slow movements are perhaps milked a little (that of No 90 pulls up once or twice too often), minuets are paced ideally and repeats are approached intelligently: minuet reprises are played straight through but, in outer movements, developments are briskly re-entered and recapitulations gleefully varied. There is a sparkle to the sound of the strings (modern instruments played with 'period' manners); horns and trumpets sing out thrillingly (a special notice, too, for the heroic bassoonists); and if the wind choir as a whole lacks the special beauty of period instruments

(as, for example, in the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra's *Oxford* Symphony), that's hardly a black mark on what is just about the best offering yet in this occasionally exasperating but always thought-provoking series.

David Threasher

Sym No 92 – selected comparison: Freiburg Baroque Orch, Jacobs (5/05^R) (HARM) HMX296 1849

Haydn

Violin Concertos - HobVIIa/1; HobVIIa/3; HobVIIa/4 Champs-Elysées Orchestra / Giuliano Carmignola vn Archiv ® 477 8774AH (59' • DDD)



Carmignola makes the case for Haydn's violin concertos

Haydn's concertos do not count among his most popular works and it's perhaps not difficult to see why. Composed during his first decade as Kapellmeister to the Esterházy family, they don't exhibit the tautness of design of the symphonies of the period. First movements are arranged in a sort of hybrid between the old-fashioned ritornello style of the Baroque period and an embryonic sonata form; and, while slow movements are songful and finales acrobatic, there's little opportunity for anything that delves much deeper than sweetness of tone or virtuoso display. The melodic imperative implied by the concerto of the time seems to have interested Haydn less than the distillation and exploration of motif that is the province of the symphony.

Nevertheless, the three authentic violin concertos presented here (out of more than 10 that have been attributed to Haydn at one time or another) are never less than finely crafted and utterly charming. Recordings of all three on period instruments are few and far between: a search for the standard comparison - by Simon Standage with Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert (Archiv, 5/89) - reveals it to be available now only as a download. So this disc stands on its own merits, which are considerable: Carmignola plays as if this music had been composed specifically for him, with all the tonal richness and agility required of him and with a pinpoint accuracy of intonation that occasionally defeats Standage, while his Parisian accompanists match all their frontman's vivacity and charisma. There's no denying that these works aren't the last word in violin concerto composition but, performed as scintillatingly as this, they're worth an hour of anyone's time.

David Threasher

Hérold

Piano Concertos - No 1; No 2; No 3; No 4 Angéline Pondepeyre pf WDR Radio Orchestra, Cologne / Conrad von Alphen Talent © ② DOM381020/21 (88' • DDD)



First recording for Ferdinand 'Zampa' Hérold's concertos

Despite the implausible name of the booklet writer, C Content, I am not at all happy with the rudimentary liner-notes on the music. For background on these obscure works, here receiving their world premiere recordings, we need to be told rather more than that 'from 1811 to 1813, Hérold gets down to writing the four concertos for piano and orchestra. In this respect Hérold is the first French composer to write for the pianoforte in his country. These four concertos form a whole, of which the last chord of the Fourth Concerto constitutes the outcome...Bernard Boetto has done work of "musical palaeographer" while presenting us a quite legible material.' The manuscripts were discovered in the National Library of Paris; my guess is that the works were written in Italy after Hérold had won the Grand Prix de Rome.

Hérold, remembered today for his overture to Zampa and the ballet La fille mal gardé (its best-known number, the Clog Dance, added later by an obscure German composer called Peter Hertel), was primarily an opera and ballet composer. Judging by these early concertos, it was a wise career move. Not that they are terrible. They are just terribly humdrum, watered-down Cramer and Clementi – and that's saying something – with a faded, tinkly music-box charm. Concertos Nos 1 and 4 have but two movements, the former being in E major, one of a very small number of piano concertos written in the key up to that time. Concerto No 3 in A major is arguably the most individual of the four, its second movement a duet for piano and violin, its third a pleasantly catchy rondo.

All might have fared better had the orchestra been galvanised into action by the conductor ('he has gained tremendous popularity with orchestras for the professional manner in which he rehearses and performs') or inspired by a musician who no doubt is an able accompanist and chamber musician but no concerto soloist. These works need someone of the stature of Howard Shelley to show them in their best light rather than a dimly flickering lantern.

Jeremy Nicholas

Kalkbrenner

'The Romantic Piano Concerto, Vol 56'
Piano Concertos - No 2, Op 85; No 3, Op 107.
Adagio ed Allegro di bravura, Op 102
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra / Howard Shelley pf
Hyperion © CDA67843 (69' • DDD)



Second Kalkbrenner disc in Hyperion's 'Rom Con' series

Friedrich (Frédéric) Wilhelm Michael Kalkbrenner (1785-1849) is remembered – if at

all – as the figure who famously offered to teach a certain Fryderyk Chopin all he knew, with the Pole equally famously turning down his kind offer. Like many figures who attain considerable success in their own lifetimes, Kalkbrenner's posthumous reputation has been demolished with a certain amount of glee by musical commentators down the decades – perhaps unsurprisingly, given that his ego was as legendary as his pianistic dexterity. His brilliance as a pianist is certainly borne out by the treacherous difficulty of his four concertos, Nos 1 and 4 of which appeared in Vol 41 of Hyperion's justly acclaimed series (10/06).

There's no lessening of brilliance or notes per minute in this second instalment but what is remarkable about Howard Shelley's performances is the insight they offer into the era itself. Kalkbrenner's Third Concerto dates from 1829, the year before Chopin's two youthful concertos. It was a period when you could construct a work from a few standard devices and then embellish to your heart's content, limited only by your imagination, good taste or pianistic technique. In the hands of a genius such as Chopin, Weber or Mendelssohn, you'd end up with something that transcended its origins. In the hands of a first-rate second-rater such as Hummel or Moscheles, the result was unfailingly ebullient and diverting, and sometimes considerably more than that. And then there are the also-rans, Kalkbrenner among them - those composers whose music lives or dies depending on its interpreters.

By this reckoning, Shelley is a formidable presence both as soloist and conductor. Yes, he has the technique and dexterity to play this music; but he also understands how to make the most of the orchestral writing (which, it has to be said, is frequently more interesting than Chopin's). Listen, for instance, to his way with the grandiose opening of the Adagio ed Allegro di bravura, bringing out its Beethovenian tinges (and the surely intentional reference to the first movement of the latter's Violin Concerto). And when it comes to pure musical silliness, such as the finale of the Second Concerto, spewing out notes in all directions with all the gravitas of a party-popper, he avoids the temptation to camp up the music, instead letting its frivolity speak for itself. There's a considerable grace to his playing too - his immersion in repertoire of this period has given him an innate understanding of what makes it tick. So a big thumbs-up for Shelley and his fellow musicians, even if Kalkbrenner is hardly the kind of composer with whom you'd want to be stuck on a desert island. Harriet Smith

Liszt · Wagner



Liszt Piano Concertos^{ab} - No 1, S124; No 2, S125. Consolation, S172 No 3^a. Valse oubliée, S215 No 1^a **Wagner** A Faust Overture^b. Siegfried Idyll^b



Thomas Fey: 'occasionally exasperating but always thought-provoking' in Haydn

aDaniel Barenboim pf

^bStaatskapelle Berlin / Pierre Boulez

Accentus (F) ♣ ACC20239; (F) ♠ ACC10239 (91° NTSC • 16:9 • DTS-HD MA, DTS 5.1 & PCM stereo • 0)
Recorded live at the Philharmonie, Essen, June 2011



Giants Boulez and Barenboim in the two Liszt concertos

Personally, I have never been swept away by Barenboim's Liszt. While I stand in awe of his accomplishments as a man and musician (how many could get these two technically demanding concertos under their fingers in their late sixties, especially given the cruel demands of his non-pianistic activities?), he seems unwilling or unable to deliver several vital elements of the composer: the heroic, the scintillating and, yes, the showman. What we get is Teutonic Liszt and the feeling that he'd rather be playing Brahms. Others disagree. They find in Barenboim's approach to Liszt – and these concertos in particular - a depth of expression and meaning that has mysteriously escaped all others.

Barenboim's magisterial approach is shared to a lesser extent by Emil von Sauer, the only one of Liszt's pupils to have recorded both concertos. This he did in 1938 at the age of 76, in performances that last 19'20" and 20'39" respectively (as opposed to Barenboim's 21'53" and 23'45"), conducted by Felix Weingartner with a deal more panache and conviction than Boulez. If the octogenarian Boulez suddenly realised what he had been missing all these years by never having conducted these works before, he singularly fails to convey his enthusiasm for the task. The *Faust Overture* and *Siegfried Idyll* find him in more congenial territory.

Curiously, on disc 3 of von Sauer's complete recordings on Marston, the two concertos are followed by (tr 3) *Consolation* No 3 in D flat and (tr 4) *Valse oubliée* No 1 – exactly the same two encores offered by Barenboim after the concertos. Von Sauer's conceptions of these are, however, markedly different, being very much closer to convention (3'23" and 2'47"); Barenboim spins out the *Consolation* to last just shy of six minutes, the *Valse* – admittedly a haunting re-creation – to 3'46".

The concert (actually culled from two identical concerts on successive days) is very well filmed and recorded. **Jeremy Nicholas** *Pf Concs – selected comparison:*

Von Sauer, Paris Cons Orch, Weingartner (MARS) 53002-2

Marthinsen

Concerto for Three Trombones and Orchestra, 'In the Shadow of the Bat'a. Opera Trailers - Snow White's Mirror; The King of Utopiaville. Symphony No 2, 'Snapshot Symphony'

^aHåkan Björkman, Stefan Schulz,

Jörgen van Rijen tbns

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra / Christian Lindberg
Dacapo open space (F) 8 226545 (70' • DDD)



Orchestral canvases from Denmark's pop-art symphonist

Niels Marthinsen's Snapshot Symphony (2009) follows its predecessor, Monster (1995, 10/06), by 14 years and equal blithe disregard for Classical norms. A topsy-turvy 'Fiesta Mexicana' is succeeded by an 'Arabian Nights' in which Disneyan pastiche gets over-familiar with the score of The Mummy. The finale, 'Fireworks in China', is a stop-start orchestral toccata, noisy with lots of rudimentary 'local colour' (though at one point sounding like Gershwin!). This is picture-postcard symphonism, conceived in the film studio and drawn in poster paints and broad strokes. On its own terms it is undeniably effective but the shades of Bruckner, Nielsen and Holmboe can rest easy.

Marthinsen's style has its subtleties and the dark, single-span Concerto for three trombones *In the Shadow of the Bat* (2009) inhabits a very different expressive world. His idiom is better suited to concerto-writing than the symphonic (the result here is more convincing) and full of fascinating passages, such as the Villa-Loboson-speed dialogue for the solo choir and orchestral brass starting a little after 4'00".

The 'Opera Trailers', *Snow White's Mirror* (2010) and *The King of Utopiaville* (2009), if nothing else show what a busy composer he is. As with the previous issue, these are Marthinsen at his most approachable and would make likeable concert openers. Christian Lindberg relishes their sound worlds and the various challenges provided by music that is not as easy to play as it sounds. The Aarhus Symphony Orchestra respond with élan once more and Dacapo's sound is as terrific as ever. I fail to understand how their superb catalogue has managed to remain under the critical radar so much. **Guy Rickards**

Mozart

Piano Concertos - No 11, K413; No 12, K414; No 13, K415

Andrea Bacchetti pf

Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto / Carlo Goldstein Dynamic (E) CDS713 (76' • DDD)



Bacchetti follows lauded solo discs with orchestral Mozart

Andrea Bacchetti is a pianist possessed of poise

and elegance, attributes mirrored by the Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto and conductor Carlo Goldstein. These are performances that can't be faulted in terms of taste: vet they don't ignite the music, to raise it to the sublime as the greatest readings can. There are times when the players sound a touch deliberate in tempo and nuance, lacking a degree of carefree joy in the finales of K414 and 415, with good taste perhaps taking precedence over character. Comparison of even a few bars of Bacchetti's and Kocsis's readings of the opening Allegro of K413 underlines the difference between a fine and an outstanding interpretation. Kocsis's playing has an infectious combination of barely contained energy and considerable intricacy, alongside which the Italian's interpretation comes across as rather generalised.

The Uchida and Perahia cycles remain classic, though some will find the latter's classical restraint preferable to Uchida's tender – and at times hyper-reactive – sensitivity. The slow movement of K414 is particularly poignant in Perahia's hands, though I'm also very taken with Edna Stern's wonderfully responsive reading of this work, balancing seriosity with playfulness and always finding tempi that seem entirely apt. Bacchetti here sets out a grander agenda that isn't always matched by the playing itself: if you're looking for that kind of approach, Myra Hess is a good bet.

The recording places the piano within a natural perspective but ultimately this new release doesn't alter the status quo. Harriet Smith

Selected comparisons – coupled as above:

Perabia, ECO (6/78⁸, 5/80⁸, 10/85⁸) (SONY) 82876 87230-2 Uchida, ECO, Tate (2/89⁸, 1/91⁸) (PHIL) 475 7306PB8 K413 – selected comparison:

Kocsis, Budapest Fest Orch (3/99) (PHIL) 456 577-2PH K414 – selected comparison:

Stern, Orch d'Auvergne, van Beek (5/11) (ZZT) ZZT100901 Hess, American CO, Scholz (MUSI) CD779

Rachmaninov

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op 43^a. Symphony No 3, Op 44

^aYevgeny Sudbin *pf*



Sudbin switches orchestra (again) for the Rach rhapsody

The Rhapsody kicks off at a real allegro vivace, full of intent and purpose but with less sense of an Introduction than the more deliberate tempo of the composer (in 1941) and most others. By journey's end, Sudbin's overall timing of 23'07" (exactly the same as Rubinstein's 1956 version, with its wittiest of all endings) is a minute slower than Rachmaninov's. It seems much longer. Don't mistake me. This, as you would expect from

Sudbin, is a performance rich in detail and immaculately executed; furthermore, from the outset the ear is immediately taken by the superb sound quality (Thore Brinkman): hear how the gratifying woodwind writing in Vars 2, 4, 7 et seq is subtly focused. But overall it does not hang together quite as successfully as Moiseiwitsch (outstanding in 1938), Byron Janis (live in 1968) or Yuja Wang (2011). Sudbin strives far too hard for effect in the solo writing of Var 18 – and give me Rachmaninov's ardent, swooning Philadelphia strings any day – while the final four variations sound anxious and fretful instead of cocksure and debonair.

What a good idea to follow this not with another concerto but with the work which Rachmaninov wrote directly after the *Paganini* Rhapsody, the only one of his three symphonies he himself recorded (albeit without the repeat of the *Allegro moderato*'s exposition). Lan Shui and his Singaporean players play their hearts out, without matching the intensity of the composer's 1939 account of the finale, and bring an apt autumnal glow to the lovely second movement in BIS's ideal acoustic. Jeremy Nicholas

Rhapsody – selected comparison: Rachmaninov (RCA) 82876 67892-2 Rubinstein (RCA) 09026 63035-2 Moiseiwitsch (NAXO) 8 110676 Wang (DG) (6/11) 477 9308GH

Schoenberg · Wagner

Schoenberg Pelleas und Melisande, Op 5
Wagner Tristan und Isolde - Act 1, Prelude
Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester / Pierre Boulez
DG ® 477 9347GH (51' • DDD)
Recorded live in Tokyo, 2003



Boulez with youngsters in Schoenberg's Maeterlinck epic

No composer-conductor is more sensitive than Pierre Boulez to the divergent responses to Wagner's Tristan that can be traced in Debussy's opera and Schoenberg's symphonic poem, both derived from Maeterlinck's Pelléas et Mélisande. The more determinedly (since the 1970s) Boulez as conductor has engaged with late-Romantic German music as well as with Debussy, Ravel and Messiaen, the more difficult - the hypothesis runs - he has found it to compose anything of substance himself. But there is no hint of resentful coolness or distancing in these performances. Travelling to Japan with the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester in 2003, Boulez at 78 tapped into levels of youthful intensity, even abandon, that his earlier readings of such music had tended to avoid.

Schoenberg's first major orchestral score benefits greatly from not being allowed to sprawl, but keeping the music's richly



Young love: Pierre Boulez and the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra record Schoenberg's Pelleas und Melisande

orchestrated flow under a tight rein doesn't diminish its expressive power and Boulez brings out the best aspects of its formal flexibility and textural richness. In the final stages he even allows himself to broaden the tempo at a place not asked for by the composer without sounding contrived; and, while a studio-based recording might have found even more subtlety and sumptuousness in the opulent instrumentation, this reading is a fine complement to Boulez's earlier Chicago recording of the work. As curtain-raiser the Prelude to Act 1 of Tristan grows to an ecstatically impassioned climax before the beautifully shaped dying fall of Wagner's concert ending achieves an effect of well-nigh Debussian understatement. The rapport between seasoned maestro and youthful players has never been more satisfying. Arnold Whittall

Shostakovich

Piano Concertos^a - No 1, Op 35^b; No 2, Op 102. 24 Preludes, Op 34 Andrei Korobeinikov pf ^bMikhail Gaiduk *tpt* ^aLahti Symphony Orchestra / Okko Kamu Mirare ® MIR155 (78' • DDD)

Shostakovich





Piano Concertos^a - No 1, Op 35^b; No 2, Op 102. Violin Sonata, Op 134^c

Alexander Melnikov pf

b Jeroen Berwaerts tpt clsabelle Faust vn Mahler Chamber Orchestra / Teodor Currentzis Harmonia Mundi ® HMC90 2104 (74' • DDD)





Both Shostakovich concertos from Russian pianists in Lahti and Landshut

Moscow-born Andrei Korobeinikov, only in his mid-20s, offers highly competitive accounts of the two Shostakovich concertos. Colourful, agile, sensitive, imaginative in detail and well integrated with the orchestra (whose contribution is itself well above average), his playing has almost everything one could hope for, both here and in the Preludes, which emerge as sharp-etched miniature portraits of the many faces of Shostakovich before the masks of necessary self-preservation contorted them. Admittedly, the acoustic is bordering on over-resonant and Korobeinikov is sometimes on the generous side with his pedalling.

Otherwise the only serious quibbles would be with his significant compromise over tempo in the final mini-cadenza of the First Concerto and with his prosaic lead-in to the finale of the Second.

Sadly for him, his disc arrives at the same time as something truly extraordinary. Alexander Melnikov's Shostakovich Preludes and Fugues (8/10) have rightly garnered high praise. But his new disc of the concertos and the Violin Sonata is something else. The Second Concerto is placed first, which seems a curious choice until the revelation of the performance itself. The hide-and-seek games between piano and orchestra in the first movement are delectable enough. But then the slow movement...to call this breathtaking would be an understatement. Starting at a whisper, Melnikov fines his sound down to the threshold of audibility and extends phraseendings until the world seems to stand still. All this goes far beyond anything in the score or in the composer's own recordings. For me, this is Shostakovich-playing on a level of inspiration I have only heard in my dreams. In the finale, undertones of sarcasm and aggression are given full value. The First Concerto is scarcely less



The microphones of Channel Classics capture Stravinsky in Budapest

inspired. Jereon Berwaerts's trumpet plays straight man to Melnikov's quicksilver changes of mood, and Teodor Currentzis and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra are full participants in what must be one of the most creative dialogues in the work's recorded history.

In the Violin Sonata, Melnikov becomes the responsible, philosophically minded chamber partner this dark masterpiece demands. The violin part can perhaps take an even larger personality and wider range of colour than Isabelle Faust brings to it. Even so, the bite of the *scherzo* and the craziness of the finale's later variations are fully realised. Melnikov himself supplies a thoughtful essay and the recording quality is top-drawer. The disc as a whole is outstanding, not only in the category of recent concerto recordings but in the Shostakovich discography as a whole.

David Fanning

Spohr

Symphonies - No 7, 'The earthly and divine in human life', Op 121; No 9, 'The Seasons', Op 143. Introduzione, WoO5. Festmarsch, WoO3 Svizzera Italiana Orchestra / Howard Shelley Hyperion ® CDA67939 (69' • DDD)



Fifth disc in Shelley's Swiss-Italian Spohr project

A depiction of Winter that opens Symphony No 9 probably exemplifies why Beethoven said of Spohr, 'He is too rich in dissonances; pleasure in his music is marred by his chromatic melody'. Nevertheless, neither would be out of place in this movement, yet Howard Shelley underplays its character. Pacing is too quick for *Allegro maestoso* and he doesn't give himself enough time either to keep a firm hold on the rhythms or tinge timbres to suggest a tone-painting. Warmer weather finds Shelley in closer rapport with pictorial elements, graciously rather than crisply responsive to Spring (a *scherzo* and trio) and tenderly so to Summer (*Largo*), if not quite in tune with its darkening central section. He is at his most sympathetic in Autumn, at home in its atmosphere of hunting and social camaraderie.

The recording of the large works is hampered by a lack of transparency, mainly in the middle and lower end of the tonal spectrum. Orchestral attack is subdued by sound that isn't realistically lucid in range which prejudices both music and performance. Symphony No 7 comes off worse because three movements of colour and theatricality, elicited by its subject matter, are more compromised by the engineering. And Spohr's penchant for prolixity rather than succinctness isn't helped either. Shelley's control of two groups, one chamber, one orchestral, is adept and his conducting has greater application, but the efforts of maestro and musicians aren't heard to full effect. The small pieces are better presented.

Nalen Anthoni

Stravinsky



Fischer's new Rite from Budapest's Palace of Arts

The languid opening bassoon solo, which in this instance more evokes a humid rainforest than an unforgiving patch of pagan Russia, sets the scene: Iván Fischer's The Rite of Spring is sensual and revealing, and, although amply spirited, is less high-energy than Markevitch, Dorati and a handful of others. Those on the trail of specific detail will be kept busy. The balance of brass, woodwinds and string in 'Spring Rounds' suggests a community of equals in perfect accord; and, while the music breathes heavily, you're still aware of its roots in the world of dance. I doubt that the constituent parts of 'Procession of the Sage', including converging cross-rhythms and an audible guiro (a scraper that looks like a huge insect), have ever sounded on disc with as much clarity. There's an elasticity to Fischer's conducting that keeps Stravinsky's score pliable, though when the percussion give their all (as in 'Dance of the Earth'), the floor shakes. Even after the passage of almost a century, the opening of 'The Sacrifice' (the ballet's second half) is a world apart - strange, uncharted and chilling, its only light a grudging glimmer from a distant planet. Of course I'm talking blatant sci-fi here, which was far from Stravinsky's intention, but you can blame Fischer: he's the one who underlines the otherworldly magic. 'Ritual Action of the Ancestors' is kept on a relatively tight rein, happily avoiding the hammy excesses of certain rivals.

In a word, this is a 'musical' performance, one where every note seems an inevitable outgrowth of its predecessor. It's not the most viscerally exciting version on disc (Gergiev, Dorati and Markevitch share that honour between them) but, as with Peter Eötvös and the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie (2004, BMC - another excellent production), avoids what Stravinsky himself labelled self-glorification. The 1919 Firebird Suite extends the sensation of everything fitting beautifully together, especially in 'The Firebird's Dance', while both Scherzo à la russe (symphonic version) and the Tango (orchestral version) wear an appropriately wry smile. Channel Classics' engineering is superb. Rob Cowan

Rite of Spring – selected comparisons:

Detroit SO, Dorati (2/82⁸, 9/86⁸) (DECC) 460 644-2DP

Philb Orch, Markevitch (6/97) (TEST) SBT1076

Kirov Orch, Gergiev (11/01) (PHIL) 468 035-2PH

Junge Deutsche Philb, Eötvös (9/06) (BMCR) BMCCD118

Vaughan Williams

Symphonies - No 4^a; No 5^b

Toronto Symphony Orchestra / Peter Oundjian
TSO Live (F) TSOO311 (74' • DDD)

Recorded live at Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto,

bNovember 2008, aMarch 2011



Vaughan Williams in Toronto from the RSNO's boss-elect

Toronto-born Peter Oundjian (a prize-winning pupil of Manoug Parikian and former first violinist of the Tokyo String Quartet) took over the directorship of his hometown orchestra back in 2004; on this evidence, he has succeeded in reviving its fortunes to a remarkable degree.

The concert performance of the Fifth Symphony dates from November 2008 and features playing of conspicuous refinement: the strings have body, sheen and pliability, and there are mellifluous contributions from the wind and brass principals. Interpretatively Oundjian doesn't put a foot wrong, for his reading is cannily paced, scrupulously prepared, free of artifice and, ultimately, very moving. The 'Romanza' in particular receives memorably rapt advocacy: it would be a chilly heart that did not melt to the lower strings' radiant cantabile tone at fig 9 (8'43") or the solo viola's unutterably wistful ppp 'alleluia' eight bars from the end (11'44"). The symphony's epilogue, too, is as exquisitely layered and tenderly voiced as one could desire. Both sound and balance are undistractingly truthful throughout.

Captured live by the TSO Live microphones in March 2011, the Fourth is just as insightful. Again, the ever-watchful Oundjian keeps a secure hand on the structural tiller, his Toronto strings responding with notably clean articulation and nourishing expressive fibre. Perhaps the largamente peak of the first movement might have conveyed a touch more barefaced fury (those chuntering fff horns don't quite cut through the texture as they should), though Oundjian does show real perception in his handling of the ensuing coda (and the same material's sublimely inevitable reappearance in the finale). Sonics are less pleasing than in the Fifth but on the whole this is as rewardingly fluster- and bluster-free a Fourth to have come my way since the RLPO's uncommonly cogent 1991 account under Vernon Handley - another conductor who manages to keep both musicality and composure intact in the surrounding maelstrom. Andrew Achenbach Sym No 4 - selected comparison: RLPO, Handley (CFP) 575310-2

'75 Years'

'Ysaÿe & Queen Elisabeth Violin Competition'
Bartók Violin Concerto No 2ª Beethoven Violin
Concerto, Op 61b Elgar Violin Concerto, Op 61c
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, Op 64d Paganini
Violin Concerto No 1, Op 6e Shostakovich Violin
Concerto No 1, Op 77 Sibelius Violin Concerto,
Op 47g Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, Op 35h
bKristóf Baráti, dMiriam Fried, ePhilippe Hirshhorn,
'Yossif Ivanov, aBarnabás Kelemen, Gidon Kremer,

hVadim Repin, 9Nikolaj Znaider 1713
National Orchestra of Belgium, Royal Philharmonic
Orchestra of Flanders, Symphony Orchestra of the
RTB-BRT / René Defossez, Georges Octors, Marc
Soustrot, Daniel Sternefeld, Gilbert Varga
Muso ® 4 MUOO2 (5h 10' • ADD/DDD)
Recorded live, 1967-2005



Great performances from the QE competition caught on CD

The international violin competition in Brussels, founded as a result of the friendship between Ysaÿe and Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, was first held in 1937, when David Oistrakh won first prize. To commemorate its 75th anniversary, Muso has issued this collection of concerto performances recorded at the competition. The listener is immediately aware that each performance is a special occasion for the soloist, leading to some compelling music-making.

The earliest recordings date from 1967. Gidon Kremer's Elgar is high-powered and assured, not always catching its more graceful moods but wonderfully imaginative in the finale's accompanied cadenza. From the same year, Philippe Hirshhorn's Paganini is revelatory. Most violinists would struggle, even in studio conditions, to achieve his level of accuracy and purity, let alone his carefree spirit and thoughtful expressive nuances. The one blemish here is the senseless, damaging cuts to the orchestral sections. Four years later, Miriam Fried's Mendelssohn is just as outstanding. She clearly inspires the orchestra with her passionate commitment and, in the first movement, maintains an exemplary distinction between the passages marked agitato and tranquillo.

Vadim Repin (1989) is especially thrilling in the finale of the Tchaikovsky and is successful, too, in demonstrating the lyrical inspiration of the first movement. Eight years later, we find Nicolaj Znaider intensely involved with the Sibelius; in meeting its complex technical challenges, there's no sense of him holding back, or playing for safety. At the same competition, Kristóf Baráti's Beethoven gives us immaculate playing with lovely, clear tone, though in the outer movements seeming a little lacking in force and vigour.

In the 21st century, Yossif Ivanov (2005) encompasses the extreme contrasts of Shostakovich's First Concerto, as convincing in the meditative music as in the harsh, grotesque episodes. And Barnabás Kelemen (2001) is clearly at home in Bartók; this is a splendidly idiomatic, natural performance, especially touching in the central *Andante*.

Recorded in the dry acoustic of the Brussels Centre for Fine Arts, Sibelius and Elgar perhaps lose in atmospheric quality but Bartók and Shostakovich sound admirably clean and pungent. Taken together, these live performances constitute a remarkable display of musical talent.

Duncan Druce

'The Red Piano'

Chi My Motherland (arr Zhao) Guang Colourful clouds chasing the moon (arr Jianzhong) Jian'er Celebrating our new life (arr Wanghua) Jingfeng/Nan Remote Shangri-La (arr Zhao) Traditional Five Yunnan Folksongs (arr Jianzhong). Glowing red morningstar lilies (arr Jianzhong). In that place wholly faraway (arr Zhao). Kangding Love Song (arr Zhao). Liu Yang River (arr Jianzhong)
Xinghai Yellow River Concertoa Zhao Pi Huang (Peking Opera) Zhenbang Why are the flowers so red? (arr Zhao)

Yundi n

^aChina NCPA Concert Hall Orchestra / Chen Zuohuang EMI ⊕ 088685-2 (62' • DDD)



China's touchstone piano concerto new from Yundi

Ever since New York Times critic Harold Schonberg panned the Yellow River Concerto in 1973 as a 'rehash of Rachmaninov, Khachaturian, late Romanticism, bastardised Chinese music and Warner Brother climaxes', the most-played work in the Chinese piano repertory has had something of an image problem abroad. Lang Lang's superb rendering on his 'Dragon Songs' collection (DG, 3/07) played down the Cultural Revolution politics and made a fresh case for the piece on musical grounds. Unfortunately, this recording sets back the cause a couple of decades.

Unlike Lang's account, in which every sound conductor Long Yu drew from the China Philharmonic is crisply recorded, Yundi Li's performance with the newly formed orchestra of China's National Centre for the Performing Arts (recorded in the NCPA Concert Hall) is a muddled mess. Even compared with Eugene Ormandy's generically romantic reading - recorded just after the Philadelphia Orchestra's historic tour of China conductor Chen Zuohuang barely delivers the 'Warner Bros climaxes'. And instead of Lang Lang's interpretative method, gleefully approaching the piece as second-rate Rachmaninov, Yundi treats the score dutifully like bad Chopin, poring over the melodies in search of poetic depth that simply isn't there.

The Chopinesque readings fare better in the solo works that follow, particularly in pieces like Wang Jianzhong's *Five Yunnan Folksongs*, which benefit greatly from the improvisatory spirit of a nocturne. But, in general, the remaining assemblage of older, folk-inspired tunes with post-1949 political works is an ill-considered mix that barely holds together musically from piece to piece.

Ken Smith

gramophone.co.uk GRAMOPHONE MAY 2012 85



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GRAMOPHONE DISC OF THE MONTH

Debussy/Szymanowski: Piano Works; Rafal Blechacz

DG 477 9548 £12.99

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Beethoven: Piano Trios Op 1(1) & Op 97; Crooper/Walsh/Rosco	oe .	Medtner: Arabesques, Dithyrambs etc; Hamish Milne	
Sonimage SON11102	£12.99	Hyperion CDA67851/2 (2 CDs)	£23.99
Brahms: German Requiem/etc; Monteverdi Choir/Gardiner		Shostakovich: Piano Concertos; Melnikov/Mahler CO/Currentzis	
Soli Deo Gloria SDG 706	£12.99	Harmonia Mundi HMC 902104	£13.99
Brahms: Choral Works; Collegium Vocale, Ghent/Herreweghe		"Tune thy Musick to thy Hart"; Stile Antico/Fretwork	
PHI LPH003	£12.99	Harmonia Mundi HMU 807554 (SACD)	£13.99
Dvorak: Cello Concerto; Zuill Bailey/Indianapolis SO/Markl		Ysaye: Violin Sonatas; Tai Murray	
Telarc TEL32927-02	£12.99	Harmonia Mundi HMU 907569	£13.99
De Falla: Nights in the Gardens of Spain/etc; Bavouzet/		DVD - Mozart: Zauberflote; Groissbock/Pirgu/Boer (La Scala)	
BBC Philharmmonic/Juanjo		Opus Arte OA 1066D	£24.99
Chandos CHAN 10694	£12.99	(Also available on Blu-Ray, OABD 7099D, £29.99)	

OUR PICK OF THE MONTH'S NEW RELEASES

Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique; SCO/Ticciati		Patrick Hawes: Lazarus Requiem; Walker/Thomas/Lloyd/RSNO	
Linn CKD 400 (SACD)	£11.99	Signum SIGCD 282	£12.99
Bliss: Complete Piano Music; Bebbington		Heggie: Dead Man Walking; DiDonato/Dutlip/Houston Opera/	Summers
SOMM CD 0111	£9.99	Virgin 602 4632 (2 CDs)	£19.99
Brahms: Piano Works Vol 1; Barry Douglas		Howells: Requiem etc; Trinity College Choir Cambridge/Layton	
Chandos CHAN 10716	£12.99	Hyperion CDA 67914	£12.99
Brahms: Violin Sonatas 1-3; Marwood; Madzar		Mahler: Kindertotenlieder/etc; Mingardo/Aurie Musici	
Wigmore Hall WHLIVE 0050	£8.99	Eloquentia EL 1233	£13.99
Bruckner: Symphony 1; Orhc de la Suisse Romande/Janows	ki	Monteverdi: Salve Morale e SpiritualeVol 2; Sixteen/Christophe	rs
Pentatone PTC 5186447 (SACD)	£13.99	Coro COR 16101	£12.99
Bruckner: Symphony 7; Staatskapelle Berlin/Barenboim		Part: Creator Spritus; Theatre of Voices/etc/Hillier	
DG 479 0320	£11.99	Harmonia Mundi HMU 807553 (SACD)	£12.99
Chilcott: Requiem etc; Wells Cathedral CHoir/Owens		Prokfiev: Piano Sonata 6 (+ LIszt/Saint-Saens); Behzod Abdurain	nov
Hyperion CDA 67650	£12.99	Decca 478 3301	£12.99
Chisholm: Piano Concertos; Driver/BBC SSO/Macdonald		Rachmaninov: Paganini Var/Sym 3; Sudbin/Singapore SO/Shui	
Hyperion CDA 67880	£11.99	BIS SACD 1988	£12.99
Debussy: String Quartet etc; Brodsky Qt etc		Rachmaninov: Symphonic Dances/Stravinsky: Symphony; LSO/	Gergiev (
Chandos CHAN 10717	£12.99	LSO Live LSO 0688 (SACD)	£8.99
Elgar: cello Concerto etc; Watkins/BBC Philharmonia/Davis		Schmelzer: Sonate e Balleti; Freiberger BarockConsort	
Chandos CHAN 10709	£12.99	Harmonia Mundi HMC 902087	£13.99
"Fantasia"; Yuja Wang		Schubert: Schwanengesang/Piano Sonata D960; Goerne/Escher	nbach
DG 479 0052	£12.99	Harmonia Mundi HMC 902139/40 (2 CDs)	£13.99
Kathleen Ferrier Centenary Edition - the Complete Decca F	Recordings	Shostakovich: Symphony 11; Monte Carlo PO/Kreizberg	
Decca 478 3589 (15 CDs)	£54.99	OPMC Classics OPMC 005	£12.99
Gesualdo: Quinto Libro di Madrigali; Hillard Ensemble		"Storyteller"; Tine Thing Helseth (trumpet)	
ECM 476 4755	£13.99	EMI 088 3282	£12.99
Halvorsen: Orchestral Works Vol 4; Bergen PO/jarvi		Turina: Chamber Music; Nash Ensemble	
Chandos CHAN 10710	£12.99	Hyperion CDA 67889	£12.99
Handel/Caldara; Carmelite Vespers; Academia Montis Rega		Whitacre: Water Night/etc; Eric Whitacre Singers/LSO/Whitacre	
DHM 88691 926042 (2 CDs)	£14.99	Decca 279 6323	£12.99

DVD NEW RELEASES

Adam: Giselle; Bolshoi Ballet/Klinichev		Janacek: the Makropulos Case; Denoke/Very/Salonen (Salzburg		
BelAir BAC 074	£24.99	C Major 709 508	£24.99	
(Also available on Blu-Ray, BAC 474, £31.99)		(Also avialable on Blu-Ray, 709 604, £29.99)		
Bach: Goldberg Variations; Barenboim (Munich 1992)		Lehar: Zigeunerliebe; Perry/Buzea/Wallbert (1974 film)		
Euroarts 206 6778	£19.99	Arthaus 101 599	£24.99	
Bizet: Carmen; Obraztsova/Domingo/Kleiber (Vienna 1978)		Monteverdi: L'Incoronazione di Poppea; Persson/Connolly/etc/Bickett (2009)		
Arthaus 107 263	£24.99	Opus Arte OA 1073D	£24.99	
Cilea: Adriana Lecouvrer; Gheirghiu/Kaufmann/Elder (ROH)		(Also available on Blu-Ray, OABD 7105D, £29.99)		
Decca 074 3459 (2 DVDs)	£19.99	Monterverdi: L;Incoronazione di Poppea; Jaroussky/Di Niese/Christie (2010)		
(Also available on Blu-Ray, 074 3460, £21.99)		Virgin 070 9519 (2 DVDs)	£19.99	
Glazunov: Raymonda; La Scala Ballet/Jurowski (2011)		R Strauss: Die Frau Ohne Schatten; Gould/Schwanewilms/Thielemann (2011)		
Arthaus 101 630	£24.99	Opus Arte OA 1072D (2 DVDs)	£24.99	
(Also available on Blu-Ray, 108 051, £29.99)		(Also avialable on Blu-Ray, OABD 7104D, £29.99)		
Vladimir Horowitz: The Video Collection		Verdi: La Forza del Dsetibo (1862 version); Gorchakova/Putilin/		
Sony 88697 907209 (6 DVDs)	£69.99	Gergiev (Mariinsky 1998)Arthaus 100 079	£24.99	

(Special offer prices valid until the end of May 2012 or while stocks last. E&OE.)

GRAMOPHONE Collector

THE NEOS WEINBERG EDITION

Prompted by performances in Bregenz in 2010, Neos releases the first five volumes of its Weinberg Edition. **David Fanning** offers his verdict

any factors and several key individuals have contributed to the dramatic rediscovery of Mieczysław Weinberg since his death in 1996. But the single most dramatic event was undoubtedly the Bregenz Festival's featuring of his music in July and August 2010, for which the driving force was David Pountney. He it was who had the vision, expertise and sheer clout to mount Weinberg's Auschwitz opera, *The Passenger*, a fine production that has since been seen in Warsaw and London, and whose triumphant Bregenz premiere was swiftly issued by Neos on Blu-ray and DVD.

Not only that, but Pountney marshalled forces to put on *The Portrait* (not the same production as his own for Opera North and Nancy) and a cross-section of Weinberg's symphonic, chamber and vocal works, from which the five Neos CDs now issued are taken. There are quite a few problems with these performances, some of which are only to be expected with still relatively unfamiliar music recorded live; but nothing detracts from the bold idealism of the enterprise.

On the first volume, Vladimir Fedosevev conducts the Sixth Symphony, probably the most often recorded of Weinberg's 22 (26 if you count the four late chamber symphonies) and the most often performed outside Russia. The Sixth stands chronologically and thematically alongside Shostakovich's 13th (Babi Yar) but by no means entirely in its shadow. The boys of the Wiener Singverein negotiate the Russian texts with remarkable confidence but Fedoseyev himself sets a cautious tempo for the central orchestra-only Scherzo, then rushes through the Babi Yar-related fourth movement which is the symphony's core (though at least he does not inflict ghastly cuts, as in his Moscow recording on Relief). The return of Kondrashin's reference recording to the catalogue (Melodiya) is worth waiting for, not least because Neos's coupling of the engaging First Sinfonietta,

though bravely performed, is no match for its Chandos rival.

It pains me to speak ill of Fedoseyev, who did so much for Weinberg's cause in the 1980s, when other former powerful advocates died or had emigrated. But with the 17th Symphony and especially the Requiem, on the second and third Neos discs, there is again a serious issue with tempo. Symphony No 17 is the first instalment in Weinberg's 'War Trilogy' of symphonies and is supplied with a verse motto from Anna Akhmatova about the

'In Three Psalms, Talia Or has some difficulty floating the tone where pianissimo is called for, but she is still accomplished'

need to remember the war years – the single most important thread in his life's work. Deeply felt though the symphony obviously is, its material is resolutely abstract, and its 50 minutes are a daunting prospect for listeners and players alike. Much though one salutes the dedication of the Vienna SO, there is no getting away from the fact that Fedoseyev's tempi for the two central fast movements are leaden-footed (they were nearer the mark in his live 1984 account on Olympia).

The Requiem is an important release, since the November 2009 world premiere under Tomas Sanderling with the RLPO has not appeared commercially. Like most Soviet Requiems, this is not a sacred piece but rather another anti-war commemoration, with strong ecological subtexts. Elena Kelessidi brings to the abrasive solo writing something of the passion of her Marta in *The Passenger*, and the boys' choir just about copes with the demands of the lengthy Hiroshima cantata at the heart of the work. The real problem is, yet again, Fedoseyev's impossibly slow

tempo for the Lorca setting in the second movement. That sinks the performance, well before it has reached its dark centre. Shamefully, no texts or translations are supplied. Only recommendable, then, with severe caveats.

That Weinberg's tempi are consistently challenging is confirmed by the fourth disc. The Second Cello Sonata goes well enough until a disappointingly circumspect finale, which clocks in at 6'59", as against Chaushian and Sudbin's fluent 6'01" and Weinberg's own helter-skelter (and riveting) 5'39". Similarly, in the Piano Quintet, the composer's performance with the Borodins (Melodiya) is faster than any other, and if you can find a copy, it wins hands down for excitement. Among modern recordings, those on RCA and Hänssler Classic are broadly recommendable. For Neos, Doris Adam and the EOS Quartet are obstinately literal in the protracted slow movement and too cautious in the vehemently Bartókian finale.

Surely the most desirable disc from a Weinbergian's point of view is the last one. Three Palms, a Lermontov setting for soprano and string quartet, is admittedly one of his more rebarbative pieces, and Talia Or has some difficulty floating the tone where pianissimo is called for. But she is still far more accomplished than the squally Elena Vassilieva on the only rival account (Claves). The relatively unassuming String Trio is successfully negotiated, as is much of the Trumpet Concerto, where only a rather stolid account of the cadenza places the performance below its two modern rivals (Chandos, Teldec) and far below the recording by the dedicatee, Timofey Dokshitser, coupled with Kondrashin's searing account of Weinberg's orchestral masterpiece, the Fifth Symphony (Russian Disc).

The Bregenz recordings are good but not outstanding, limited by a certain boxiness and lack of perspective, at least by comparison with the best modern alternatives (Chandos and BIS). Documentation is only fair, and the author of the booklet-notes cannot resist reckless speculation about political content. So while Neos's filming of *The Passenger* remains a document of huge significance, these CDs should be considered with a good deal more caution. **G**

THE RECORDINGS











Chamber



Peter Quantrill reviews piano trios from Hamburg:

'The peaks of Brahms's first movement are scaled with vehemence, the second theme surges on without let-up' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 90



David Theasher reviews Schumann sonatas on BIS:

'Wallin and Pöntinen perform the Third Sonata with a seriousness of intent that reveals its many virtues' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 94

Achron

'Complete Suites for Violin and Piano'
Suites – No 1, 'en style ancien', Op 21; No 2, Op 22;
No 3, 'Quatre Tableaux fantastiques', Op 23; No 4,
'Suite bizarre', Op 41. Berceuse, Op 20a. Canzonetta,
Op 52 No 2a. Children's Suite (arr Heifetz).
Coquetterie, Op 15a. Dance Improvisation, Op 37a.
Eli Ziona. Hebrew Melody, Op 33a. Two Hebrew
Pieces, Op 35a. Liebeswidmung, Op 51a. Märchen,
Op 46a. Two Pastels, Op 44a. Pensée de Leopold
Auer. Prelude, Op 13a. La romanesca. Scher, Op 42a.
Serenade, Op 17a. Souvenir de Varsovie, Op 14a.
Stempenyu Suite. Zwei Stimmungena – Op 32;
Op 36. Les sylphides, Op 18a

Hagai Shaham vn Arnon Erez pf Hyperion (© 20 CDA67841 (159' • DDD) ^aFrom Biddulph LAW021 (4/97)



Violin suites from Auer-pupil

Achron in tapings new and old

Shaham and Erez recorded most of the short pieces in this programme in 1996; they were then issued on a Biddulph CD. The four suites date from 2009 and are newly issued.

Joseph Achron (1886-1943), a pupil of Leopold Auer and Lyadov, extended the 19th-century tradition of the violin virtuoso able to provide much of his own repertoire. He was born in Lithuania and, after a career based first in Berlin, then in Russia, emigrated in the 1920s to Palestine, later to America, settling eventually in Los Angeles. His music developed from turn-of-the-century elegance, through Scriabin-like chromaticism, to a more sharply defined, quite dissonant style – particularly well displayed here in the *Children's Suite*. Along the way, he developed a deep interest in Jewish folk music, using traditional melodies as well as incorporating its idioms into his original music.

Throughout these two discs, we're aware of Shaham and Erez's regard for Achron's music and their understanding of all its different facets. Achron frequently demands virtuosity and, in movements such as the 'Marche grotesque' that ends the *Suite bizarre*, Hagai Shaham is able to amaze us with his brilliance and dexterity. Most of these pieces are genuine duos and Arnon Erez's highly expressive, colourful playing brings out all their harmonic and textural subtleties. I'm sure this

experienced team's sensitive collaboration would have delighted the composer. If you know Achron's music, you'll want to acquire this set; if he's new to you, I can assure you he's well worth investigating.

Duncan Druce

JC Bach

'A Music Party'
Quintets - Op 11, Nos 1, 3 & 6; Op 22, Nos 1 & 2. Sextet
Amarillis

Agogique (F) AGOOO3 (76' • DDD)



Amarillis with unheard gems from the 'London Bach'

These unfailingly excellent performances of attractive chamber works provide plenty of evidence to explain why the youngest child of the famous Leipzig Cantor was such an important musical role model for Mozart. Three of the quintets for flute, oboe, violin, viola and basso continuo (cello and harpsichord) are taken from Bach's Op 11, which was published in London in 1774 and dedicated to Queen Charlotte of Great Britain and the Elector Palatine. Oboist Héloïse Gaillard's enthusiastic booklet-note praises that Bach's cantabile themes and melodies are intoxicating, sensual, surprising and 'very often a great source of joy'. Other featured works published posthumously were certainly cut from the same cloth of musical sophistication: conversational quick movements sparkle with witty use of beguiling instrumental sonorities; elegant slow music is played with idiomatic refinement.

Amarillis play the tender *Andantino* of Op 22 No 1 with touching finesse, from Amélie Michel's pastoral flute and Gaillard's gentle oboe to its delicate *pizzicato* strings. Pacy dialogues between varying combinations of instruments are immaculately judged and articulated in the *Allegro con moto* of Op 22 No 2 (apparently never recorded before). The concluding Sextet in C major is a masterpiece of civilised Enlightenment musical expression: Bach makes delightful uses of the small string, wind and brass ensemble (two horns are a welcome substitution for the flute of the prior quintets); it leaves me in no doubt that the

'London Bach' deserved the widespread international fame that eclipsed that of his father and older brothers during the zenith of his career.

David Vickers

JS Bach

Concertos - BWV1041; BWV1042; BWV1052^a. Prelude, BWV846. Solo Sonata No 1, BWV1001. Orchestral Suite No 3, BWV1068 - Air 'on the G String' (all transc Yang)

Xuefei Yang *gtr* ^a**Elias Quartet** EMI ® 679018-2 (77' • DDD)



Xuefei Yang's guitar in Bach keyboard and string concertos

Xuefei Yang becomes the latest guitarist to adapt the music of Bach for her instrument. The composer's own lute transcriptions are her models and she finds ingenious means to overcome the problems introduced when recasting, say, a bowed violin line for the plucked guitar (the reiteration of the long opening note of the so-called Air on the G String demonstrating one such problem). She chooses two violin concertos and the D minor Harpsichord Concerto, which she performs with the Elias String Quartet. She admits she initially had doubts about transcribing the harpsichord concerto and perhaps it was a mistake to open the disc with this work: the opening movement takes a while to settle into a comfortable pulse and some may find the guitar too soft-grained for the vehemence that others find in this music (to hear it really rattling with fury, turn to Bach's own transfiguration of the opening movement as the Sinfonia to Cantata No 146, with organist Silas Standage on John Eliot Gardiner's Bach Cantata Pilgrimage -SDG107). The two violin concerto arrangements are more effective, especially in Yang's impressive and thoughtful passagework; even the harpsichord concerto gets into its swing in those magnificent sequences later in the first movement that do so much to ratchet up the tension.

Throughout, Yang's technique is never in doubt. The solo works are yet more successful and, with a switch to a seven-string guitar, the C major Prelude (here transposed to A major)

is particularly beautiful. While the challenges of adapting the concertos for guitar may not have been entirely surmounted, it would be worthwhile to hear Xuefei Yang in more solo music by Bach. David Threasher

Beethoven





Piano Trios - No 1, Op 1 No 1; No 7, 'Archduke', Op 97 Peter Cropper vn Moray Welsh vc Martin Roscoe pf Sonimage (F) SON11102 (77' • DDD)



Cropper, Welsh and Roscoe begin Beethoven trios survey

As Beethoven did in the Fourth Piano Concerto four years earlier, so he does in Op 97; the pianist sets the mood, now with a lofty eight-bar theme rising from piano to forte and grounded in a resonantly chorded bassline. For the Cropper-Welsh-Roscoe Trio, moderation in pacing underscores this Allegro moderato, Martin Roscoe using varying degrees of pressure on the chords to support an affectively inflected melody; and inflected differently for the exposition repeat, thus offering an alternative view. The Scherzo, and its Trio in two sharply contrasted parts, are reiterated too (not everyone does so), exposing the stature of a movement that doesn't offer conventional light relief. Expressive penetration is deep, and gets deeper in the Andante cantabile. Beethoven's piano-writing in these four variations and coda anticipates the tranquillity within changing rhythmic patterns heard in the Arietta of his last piano sonata Op 111, and Roscoe, his grasp of structure absolute, leads his partners in an interpretation of rarefied transcendence that also exalts the whole work.

Personal rapport is close and the recording reflects a just balance within the ensemble. Though Op 1 No 1 is less ambitious in scope and sparer of texture, it has a confidence within its own scale that isn't slighted by these musicians. Again they shape the gravity of the slow movement and weight the finale, modestly rhetorical here but redoubtably so in Op 97. Beethoven described the work as a Grand Trio. So it is in this performance; ducal too.

Nalen Anthoni

Op 1 No 1 - selected comparison: Florestan Trio (6/04) (HYPE) CDA67393 Op 97 - selected comparisons. Barenboim, Zukerman, Du Pré (EMI) 350798-2 E Fischer, Schneiderhan, Mainardi (ORFE) C593 021B

Benda

Violin Sonatas - XI; XIII; XXIII; XXXII; VII - Adagio poco andante Leila Schayegh vn Felix Knecht vc Václav Luks hpd/fp Glossa (F) GCD922507 (67' • DDD)



Basel graduates champion a violinist of poise and profundity The Bohemian composer Franz Benda (1709-86) started his musical career as a boy soprano in the Benedictine church of St Nicholas in Prague and the Dresden Hofkapelle but from 1733 until the end of his long life he worked as a violinist for the Prussian Crown Prince (later Frederick the Great). The 18th-century Sturm und Drang poet Schubart remarked that the sound Benda 'drew from his violin was the echo of a silver bell', and praised his playing as lush, profound and incisive. Readers might confuse him with his younger brother Georg, who was the pioneer of melodrama - the form of spoken accompanied recitative that fascinated Mozart briefly at around the time of Zaide (1778).

Three illustrious graduates of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis perform four violin sonatas (and an additional extract from another) from a unique manuscript in which additional staves in all movements contain fully writtenout ornamented versions of the violin part (c1760). Albeit not in Benda's hand, this remarkably rare resource provides a valuable way to understand the style and substance of his own practice of embellishments. He was renowned for emotionally moving cantabile playing of adagios, so it is no surprise that these movements produce memorable results here: Leila Schayegh plays her Guarneri violin (Cremona, 1675) with an astonishing mastery over technical execution that never eclipses sincere feeling. Continuo support from Felix Knecht and Václav Luks is alert or thoughtful according to the demands of the musical mood; in two sonatas Luks plays a copy of a Cristofori fortepiano, a decision that reaps dividends in the spellbinding Adagio that begins Sonata XIII in C minor and the pulsating Allegro that opens Sonata XXXII in E major. The booklet contains a facsimile page of the Adagio poco andante from Sonata VII in A major; it exhibits the virtues of both the present-day violinist and her 18th-century predecessor. Maybe Glossa or the Schola Cantorum could have put the scores online for intrepid students of historical performance practice. David Vickers

L Berkeley

Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano. String Trio, Op 19. Sonatina for Oboe and Piano, Op 61. Oboe Quartet, Op 70. Suite for Flute, Oboe and String Trio Sarah Francis ob/cor ang Judith Fitton fl/picc Michael Dussek pf Tagore String Trio Regis (S) RRC1380 (66' • DDD)



Varied chamber works by Berkeley senior

Two world-premiere recordings top and tail this useful programme of chamber works by Sir Lennox Berkeley (1903-89). The Trio for flute, oboe and piano of 1935 is a captivating curtain-raiser, its rumba-like third-movement

Moderato (in which the wind instrumentalists switch to piccolo and cor anglais with delectably piquant results) boasting the catchiest tune imaginable. The sparky, neo-Stravinskian Suite for flute, oboe and string trio dates from five years earlier, its manuscript having been discovered among the posthumous papers of Berkeley's beloved teacher, Nadia Boulanger. Like the Trio, it gets a spirited rendition, though the opening bars reveal some tuning issues which similarly tend to take the shine off the performance of the meaty and resourceful String Trio that Berkeley completed in 1943 for a distinguished line-up comprising Frederick Grinke, Watson Forbes and James Phillips (it was they who gave the premiere in August 1944 at London's Wigmore Hall).

We're also treated to two works written for the incomparable Janet Craxton (1929-82). In the Oboe Sonatina of 1962, Sarah Francis forms an idiomatic and communicative partnership with pianist Michael Dussek, while the present, thoroughly musical reading of the Oboe Quartet (a wonderfully civilised, cogent masterwork from 1967) makes a welcome supplement to the London Oboe Quartet's pioneering Wigmore Hall account from May 1968 (a live document to cherish on Oboe Classics, 12/06, which shows Craxton at her outstandingly eloquent best).

Any small gripes aside, this remains a desirable collection, engineered with striking fidelity, and graced by detailed and illuminating annotations courtesy of Gramophone's Peter Dickinson. An enticing price tag, too! Andrew Achenbach

Bliss · Britten · Delius · Purcell

Bliss String Quartet No 2 Britten String Quartet No 2 Delius Late Swallows Purcell Chacony Barbirolli Quartet

Nimbus Alliance (F) NI6165 (78' • DDD)



Manchester foursome in mid-century British quartets

Founded in 2003, the Barbirolli Quartet brings together four string players trained at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester - explaining why they took the name of the much-loved chief conductor of the Hallé Orchestra. Since then they have built a formidable reputation both as a superbly coordinated ensemble and for taking on adventurous repertory, winning many awards. This well recorded disc bears witness to their achievement in the concentration of all the performances.

It is fascinating to compare the two main works offered, not just Bliss's Second Quartet (1950) but also Britten's Second Quartet (1945), written in part as a tribute to Purcell on the 350th anniversary of his death. Where the

idiom of the Bliss is centrally identifiable as the work of a British composer, fluent and positive, the Britten is in a different league. No doubt as a result of his experience as an occasional viola player, Britten regularly devises sounds from the four instruments that are totally original, quite unlike anything ever written before.

The Bliss is in a conventional four-movement form; and, though in several movements there is a suspicion of note-spinning, the results are still satisfying, not least in the intense, lyrical slow movement. The scherzo is the liveliest movement, with the slow introduction to the finale again intense. The Britten, as well as being original in its use of the medium, is also highly original in its structure. The first movement is in an unconventional sonata form, seemingly wayward at first but quickly revealing its logic. The brilliant central scherzo brings some astonishing effects, while the massive finale - one of the longest movements that Britten ever wrote, a chaconne in tribute to Purcell - is formidable in its range of expression. The whole work reflects the new confidence that the composer felt just after the extraordinry triumph of his opera Peter Grimes.

The Barbirollis give warm, idiomatic, intense performances of both works, at times reflecting the comment of one critic in a review, who described their playing as 'red-blooded'. The superb Purcell Chacony in G minor makes the perfect pendant to the Britten, while Delius's *Late Swallows* (1922), rounds the disc off charmingly. A very welcome issue.

Edward Greenfield

Brahms · **Liszt** · Schoenberg

Brahms Piano Trio No 3, Op 101 Liszt Tristia Schoenberg Verklärte Nacht (arr Steuermann) Boulanger Trio

Profil (F) PH11042 (59' • DDD)



Snapshot of an artform in flux from Hamburg trio Boulanger

This disc holds compressed time: that unrepeatable period of a decade or two in German culture in which the good old rules swung on their hinges, once and for all to let in the light of a new and determined age, as yet uncertainly prophesied by these two grand masters of their game. They could not write the same piece twice, and their precocious heir, whose voice - in the words of Charles Rosen, 'an acutely expressive one with a love for asymmetrical phrase and a flowing contrapuntal intricacy' - was trained by theirs as surely as if Schoenberg had actually sat and taken notes, while Brahms and Liszt, gowns flapping, wrote on the board: 'that's how it's done, from Mozart to me', as Brahms once showed Zemlinsky.

These new ideas of rhythmic dislocation and harmonic expansion demand risks, and the

Boulanger Trio (formed in 2006, based in Berlin) happily takes them. The peaks of Brahms's first movement are scaled with utmost vehemence, the second theme surges on without let-up, the development is seized with nervous violence. Their reluctance to hold back lends an oppressive compulsion to Liszt's late, despair-filled transformation of Vallée d'Obermann far removed from the sublime contemplation of the original, so that the breadth of Verklärte Nacht arrives as natural if unexpected relief. Memories of Tristan, ink-smeared or not, are banished by Steuermann's transcription and the Boulanger players to create an uncanny, vitally charged chamber precursor of the Op 9 Chamber Symphony. It's a gripping disc from start to finish. But the violinist must do something about her sniff, which is ubiquitous.

Peter Quantrill

Britten · Prokofiev · Shostakovich

Britten Cello Sonata, Op 65 Prokofiev Cello Sonata, Op 119 Shostakovich Cello Sonata, Op 40 Jamie Walton vc Daniel Grimwood pf Signum (F) SIGCD274 (67' • DDD)



The Walton-Grimwood duo in Britten-Rostropovich territory

Cellist Jamie Walton and pianist
Daniel Grimwood make an outstanding duo,
as two earlier CDs for Signum have already
demonstrated. Where those first two explored
19th-century Romantic cello sonatas, this time
the theme is largely the influence of the
Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich.

When Benjamin Britten heard Rostropovich give the British premiere of Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto in 1960 he asked the composer to introduce him to the cellist, thus beginning a key friendship. The first result was this Cello Sonata, given by Rostropovich and Britten at Aldeburgh in June 1961 in an impromptu recital which also involved Peter Pears. Similarly, it was when Prokofiev first heard Rostropovich play Shostakovich's earlier Cello Sonata that he too responded by writing his Cello Sonata for him.

The Shostakovich Sonata of 1934 comes first on the disc. Though the first and longest movement of the four tends to be wayward, hardly identifiable as the work of Shostakovich, the other three movements are much more characteristic. Maybe it is that movement which has generally prevented the piece from being more popular than it is. But the wildly dancing Scherzo, the hauntingly melancholic slow movement (bearing the main emotional weight) and the jaunty finale are a delight – particularly in a performance as lively as this in the allegros and deeply intense in the slow movement. The Britten comes next

and Walton and Grimwood consistently bring out the echoes of Soviet music that Britten no doubt intended as a tribute to his dedicatee. Walton sustains the distinctively fragmentary quality of the first movement perfectly, leading on to the striking *pizzicato* writing in the following *Scherzo*. Here too it is the 'Elegie' slow movement that bears the most emotional weight, full of dark intensity, while the jaunty march then leads into a brief *Moto perpetuo* fifth movement as tailpiece, bringing an emphatic close.

The Prokofiev, unlike the other two sonatas, is in three movements, each getting faster than the last. The *Andante grave* first movement offers a sequence of strongly contrasted sections, while the second is a march marked *Moderato* with a lyrical central section. The finale is a playful rondo with a 'travelling' theme recurring. When Prokofiev wrote the piece it was at the height of the clampdown on composers supervised by the much-feared Zhdanov, and Prokofiev, distinguished as he was, had to endure an adjudication by the guild of composers. They happily approved the work, in which the composer had aimed for a new simplicity.

The natural warmth of Walton's playing, matching that of Rostropovich himself, is finely enhanced by the crispness and fresh focus of Grimwood's accompaniments. Clear, well-balanced recording helps to make this a first-rate issue, with illuminating notes filling in the background behind each work. **Edward Greenfield**

Buxtehude

Seven Trio Sonatas, Op 2
Purcell Quartet

Chandos Chaconne (F) CHANO784 (63' • DDD)



Central volume in the Purcell

Quartet's Buxtehude traversal

The two currently running series of Buxtehude chamber music seem to be making a good job of keeping off each other's toes, despite the fact that there is only three CDs' worth of work to get through. So far the recordings by the Purcell Quartet and by Ton Koopman and friends (Challenge Classics) have clashed only on the Op 1 of 1694, and the Purcells are here the first to reach Op 2 from two years later. Like that first set, it contains seven trio sonatas for violin, gamba and continuo, cast in the 17th-century mould which assembles preludes, fugues, passacaglias and the occasional dance into multi-sectional packages with a pragmatic self-determination that makes a nice change from the ubiquitous slow-fast-slow-fast format of later Baroque sonatas. Even better, it shows Buxtehude's customary contrapuntal assurance, firm harmonic command and unostentatious but woody melodic attractiveness. Though lacking the elegance

of a Corelli, these sonatas have their own sense of poise and are ever likeable.

As before, the violinists of the Purcell Quartet share the workload, with Catherine Mackintosh taking Nos 1, 2, 4 and 5, and Catherine Weiss Nos 3, 6 and 7. Of the two, Mackintosh is the lighter in tone, wispier and ever so slightly astringent next to Weiss's firmer and more nutty sound. All four musicians, however, reveal their experience and expertise as interpreters, particularly of this kind of German repertoire, which they have been championing for some time now; less flamboyant or fatly comfortable of sound than Koopman's group, they can nevertheless pace the music's stops and starts perfectly, treading securely through the Biber-like gestures of Sonata No 5, for instance, or smoothly upping the tempo into the Vivace 'finale' of No 4. Only the eight unpublished sonatas to go now. Lindsay Kemp

Debussy · Ravel

Debussy String Quartet, Op 10 **Ravel** String Quartet **Eroica Quartet**

Resonus ^(B) → RES10107 (55' • DDD)



'Period' strings of the Eroicas 🕯 for a classic quartet pairing

The Eroica Quartet have won plenty of plaudits for their previous recordings on Harmonia Mundi. Their latest release, of the quartets of Ravel and birthday-boy Debussy, is a download-only issue from Resonus. It's available in three different formats (I reviewed it in its standard MP3 format) and a full booklet is provided as a PDF, with excellent notes from Nigel Simeone. The group's selling point is its use of gut strings and adoption of elements of period practice, something of a rarity in this repertoire. They're warmer-toned than the recent Dante disc, though hardly generous in their programming, adding nothing to the classic Debussy/Ravel quartet coupling beloved in the LP era. All of the other discs listed for comparison below offer something additional to this, from Fauré to Webern.

If the Dante are the most straightforwardly genial among my comparisons and the Hagen the most stringently neo-classical, for the Eroica tonal colour is a particular priority. Their Debussy Andantino, taken daringly slow, is intensified by muted colours and expressive portamentos, while the finale of the Ravel is shot through with a feverishness more pronounced than in the Dante's reading. Their pizzicato, such a vital component in the second movements of both quartets, is lithe and telling too.

But turn to the Ebène and suddenly you're thrown into a different world, a blast of Hockney vibrancy that makes you re-evaluate the musical landscape before you. No one compares with them when it comes to disclosing the revolutionary qualities in this music. And after that, anything less out of the ordinary, or merely tasteful, can seem rather inadequate. Harriet Smith

Selected comparisons - coupled as above: Hagen Qt (6/94) (DG) 437 836-2GH Ebène Qt (12/08) (VIRG) 519045-2 Dante Ot (6/10) (HYPE) CDA67759

Eleh

Floating Frequencies/Intuitive Synthesis Eleh elecs

Important Records (F) (3) IMPREC344 (125' • DDD) From IMPREC125, IMPREC158; IMPREC207



Anonymous Eleh extends his ideas on sound

Eleh prefers to shield his identity from those who would buy his music. Only in the last year have we had a positive ID on his gender, because before he started performing live pumping meticulously calculated sine wave drones through space (while keeping his face hidden, of course) - the Eleh who released music on limited edition vinyl, available only online, might have been male, or female, or even a collective identity for electronic music released under the Eleh moniker by persons unknown as, and when, certain predetermined aesthetic criteria were satisfied.

But why should you, gentle Gramophone reader, care about nameless drone-based electronica? Eleh (pronounced 'Ella') does touch on music reviewed reasonably often in this magazine; there could have been no Eleh without La Monte Young, Morton Feldman or Terry Riley. But, if I'm honest, there is no specific reason why you should be interested; except I hoped you could be interested in what Eleh's work says about where we're at circa 2012. Because if the last century was about a strategic tussle between tonality and atonality, Eleh lines up arguments about a great cultural divide that we all need to face during the 21st century: that between music and sound.

Check out Eleh's titles. As it is, an album calling itself 'Floating Frequencies/Intuitive Synthesis' - one which incorporates pieces with titles like Pulsing Study of 7 Sine Waves - is clearly the product of a mind entranced by the fundamentals of sound. In that way countryside ramblers claim landscape obliges them to commune with deep truths, Eleh forces you to contemplate the cosmos and your place in it.

Bass throb, resonating purely or sick with harmonic interference, generates patterns that dovetail and intersect, that grow from and evaporate back into hovering overtones, this whole narrative stretched over long-form durations. Everything happens, nothing happens. Eleh even threatens his listeners with

TUNE SURFING

iTunes' 'higher-quality' downloads



If you're a regular purchaser from iTunes, you may have stumbled across the occasional, and rather discreet, label attached to a new release that states it has been 'Mastered for iTunes'. Before Lexplain what this means. I must admit that I'm not entirely convinced that this is a milestone on a discernible, straightforward path, a staging post to something altogether more appealing (lossless audio from Apple) or simply a red herring.

In a nutshell, when you buy a recording from iTunes, the file has been taken from the CD (which is sampled at 16-bit, 44.1kHz) and then compressed using Apple's proprietary algorithm AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) - not unlike MP3, the 'lossy' format used almost everywhere else - before being made available to download (the highest bit-rate Apple offers is the 256kbps AAC iTunes Plus format). The resulting file size is roughly 20 per cent of the equivalent CD; and inevitably the sound quality has been degraded. (How much people can tell varies enormously, and for the bulk of music lovers who are plugged into their iPods - or, more likely, iPhones - in a generally noisy ambience, the convenience clearly far outweighs the shortcomings.) For the classical music buff, there are certain genres of music that do show up the degradation quite clearly: personally, I think that piano music and polyphony are the most revealing

Mastered for iTunes goes back a stage further in the recording process and, rather than use the CD to create the AAC file, takes the studio master (24-bit, 192kHz) and compresses it to AAC. The thinking is that, if there's more there to start with, the resulting file will be of a higher quality. I tried the recent release of Philip Glass's Ninth Symphony in the Mastered for iTunes download, but the sound is so synthetic that it has more of the feel of a pop mix than a classical recording. One label well represented, though, is LSO Live, and I compared the CD of Gergiev's Rachmaninov Symphonic Dances with the Mastered for iTunes download; the quality is good - though I'm not sure there was a huge difference between the Mastered for iTunes file and the 256kbps AAC file I ripped from the CD - and it costs no more than 'standard' offerings.

If this is a stepping stone on the way to lossless files from iTunes (and, given the exponential rise of hard-disk storage capacity, we'll soon have enough to store vast amounts of data), it's of some interest. But at the moment I do wonder whether it's not a confusing little cul-de-sac. James Jolly



More than a string quartet: Michael Finnissy's 'symphonic movement', performed by the Kreutzer Quartet

the prospect of boredom. After opening yourself to wavering fluctuations of sound, grounding your senses in energy fields of fundamental harmonics, Eleh may reward you with a seismic *glissando* or aftershock flutter. Or he may not bother.

Composers impose their view on the world, on sound, and brand it with their name. Notwithstanding the paradox that, by insisting on anonymity, Eleh has provoked frenzied guesswork about his identity, his sounds move by stealth and are sculpted from the world rather than from ego. Eleh is not a personality; Eleh is an idea about sound. Philip Clark

Ferrari

Suite hétéroclite. Antisonate. Sonatine elyb. Visage I. Collection de petites pièces, ou 36 enfilades pour piano et magnétophone. Fragments d'un journal intime 1980-1982 Elmar Schrammel pf

Wergo (F) WER6737-2 (74' • DDD)

Ferrari

JETZT - oder wahrscheinlich ist dies mein Alltag, in der Verwirrung der Orte und der Augenblicke Luc Ferrari, Brunhild Ferrari spkrs

Vivant Quartet de Narbonne

Wergo (F) (3) WER2O66-2 (3h 4' • DDD)





Ferrari's 36 'enfilades' along with his 1982 'radio play' about a radio play However forcefully the young Pierre Boulez pressed the case against neo-classicism, and indeed opera houses, the truth is that his music still operated inside a broad church of understanding about what music was, where it should be performed and what sort of musicians should/could be performing it. Developing their aesthetic alongside were the musique concrète guys - Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry - who detached themselves from the terms of Boulez's debate with sounds that, in the normal scheme of music, were deemed incidental, everyday, throwaway. And then there was Luc Ferrari (1929-2005), who spoke of his work reaching beyond 'merely musical concerns', as distinctions between music, sound, theatre and documentary suddenly didn't count for much. Note that's 'merely' musical

concerns. Ferrari certainly knew how to sock it to petit bourgeois composers who saw a future in 'mere' music and *Collection of small pieces, or 36 enfilades for piano and tape* (1984-85), the focal point of Schrammel's disc, highlights how provocative his stance was – especially to those who view any provocation against some Eurocentric ideal of 'art music' as a provocation too far.

Ferrari tells us that *Collection* was dreamt up originally as music theatre for a pianist operating a tape recorder. Understood. But then he explains how that concept unravelled; how he moved the piece back into the concert hall because the theatrical aspect wasn't working out but, because he loved the title so much, it remains *36 enfilades* even though one of the pieces doesn't survive the migration back from theatre to concert music. (And alarm bells ring: Ferrari once said his autobiographies contained deliberately 'falsified data'. Is he playing with us?)

An 'enfilade' is a term filched from architecture, meaning a formally aligned suite of rooms, and has been deployed ironically here. The opening Theme and Variations, all 26 seconds of it, poses questions aplenty:

what's the theme; where does the variation start; his deliberately neat, vaguely Baroque material – sincere or not? 'Objet complexe', the second piece, collapses in on itself after 10 seconds. The third section amounts to little more than a quote, then the fourth piece is an ambient field recording, recorded, perhaps, in a park. Four radically different sonic events occur in little under 90 seconds.

The other item, a three-CD set of his 1982 radio play JETZT, helps to explain the Ferrari enigma. This is a radio play about the creation of a composer creating a radio play. Music and text explain the process of creation; not the other way round. In other words, Ferrari's art was cast in the present. He wasn't into concrete statements – he was interested in the moving parts; what happens to art before its internal building blocks set. Philip Clark

Finnissy

Second String Quartet^a; Third String Quartet Kreutzer Quartet

NMC (F) NMCD180 (64' • DDD)

^aRecorded live at St Bartholemew the Great, Smithfield, London, March 2007



First recording for Finnissy's 'quartets' in name only

Take a look at Michael Finnissy's recent work list – it's there, posted on his website – and ask yourself what's going on. Could it be that the composer of *Post Christian Survival Kit*, *Casual Nudity* and *Yob Cultcha* has taken refuge in traditional forms at last, battle-wearied after decades of pressing uncomfortable and largely unwelcomed questions about music and its role in society? How else to explain an abrupt outbreak of generic titles like Piano Quartet in G minor, Organ Symphony and these Second and Third String Quartets, both written for the clearly loving-it Kreutzer Quartet.

The Second Quartet (2006-07) is a meditation on Haydn, written without a metrically aligned 'master' score. The idea, Finnissy says, is that individual parts should 'drift slightly apart', a strategy that messes with polite string quartet protocol. As Christopher Fox's shrewd booklet-note makes clear, both works begin from the assumption that the string quartet is not only a form - it's a medium too. But, say I, most composers forget that, and music that merely 'works' within terms set by romanticism, classicism or modernism - in fact any 'ism' – is of zero interest to Finnissy. He's motivated by magnifying the string quartet from the inside, broadening the form by re-examining the medium.

And mapping the 45-minute structure of his Third Quartet (2007-09) over the architectural space occupied by Bruckner *adagios* elevates the basic building blocks into something grander and more voluminous. Finnissy's 1986 String

Trio has a similar relationship to Mahler; but this new piece takes the string quartet out of itself – and indeed beyond music – with a bold and wholly unexpected sleight-of-hand.

The first time he wedges a block of pre-recorded bird song inside his viscous counterpoint - each string line inching across a multitude of chromatic, rhythmic and sonic variables - it feels like a gestural jolt too far. But then the concept takes flight: the bird song episodes become more ornate and developed, as Finnissy destabilises the string quartet's harmonic impetus by having them work off uncoordinated parts. Miraculously, it's the idea of containing sound with a concert hall that begins to look questionable and manufactured, not the recorded inserts. So much for titles only Finnissy could write what adds up to a symphonic movement, splice in bird song and label it 'string quartet'. Philip Clark

Korngold

Piano Quintet, Op 15^a. String Sextet, Op 10^b Doric Quartet with ^bJennifer Stumm va^bBartholomew LaFollette vc ^aKathryn Stott pf Chandos © CHAN10707 (67' • DDD)



More Korngold from the Dorics with friends in tow

It was not so long ago that Korngold was dismissed in some circles as a second-rate composer who sold out to Hollywood. 'More corn than gold' was a phrase dreamt up by the *New York Sun* after the premiere of his Violin Concerto. How amusing. Should there be any doubters left, they should be made to sit down and listen to these two works.

The Quintet opens with one of those glorious Korngoldian melodies of the type that would later translate into music for the silver screen. It is extraordinary, given the relatively few piano quintets, that it is not heard more often. True, it is not an easy work to play - the pianist has a particularly demanding time in the first movement, while the second has no fewer than 54 changes of time signature in its 13 pages, a set of nine free variations on Korngold's 'Luzi theme' (the coded message of love to his future wife Luzi Sonnenthal) first heard in the third of his Abschiedlieder, written at the same time (1921). The finale puts one in mind of the incidental music from Much Ado About Nothing. Stott and the Doric Quartet rather put in the shade my old Genesis LP (GS1063) from 1975, with pianist Harold Gray.

The Sextet is given an equally vigorous and stylish reading with passages of great tenderness such as the intense and melancholy *Adagio*, the second of its four movements. It aches to have lyrics attached – at least that is how the vocal quality of the playing emerges in this warmly recorded disc with its excellent booklet.

Jeremy Nicholas





Ragnhild Hemsing: the Norwegian fiddler and violinist impresses in music close to home

Schubert

Fantasie, D934. Rondo, D895. Sonata, D574 **Carolin Widmann** *vn* **Alexander Lonquich** *pf* ECM New Series ® 476 4546 (62' • DDD)



Widmann and Lonquich in Schubert's gifts to the violin

This is a fascinating Schubert recital from Carolin Widmann and Alexander Lonquich. It's cunningly programmed, with the Fantasie placed first so as to give maximum impact to its quiet, tremolo-infused piano opening that pulls you into a distinctly unnerving world, one which the entry of the violin, with its vague, long-limbed lines, does nothing to ameliorate. It's all the more mind-blowing when you realise that Schubert was not yet 30 when he wrote the piece. This and the Rondo both date from 1826, by which time the composer seems to have moved far from anything as banal as the practical possibilities of the instruments for which he was writing. These visionary, transcendent pieces are particularly well suited to Widmann's tensile, wiry sound, which lends her lines an immediacy and intensity that you also find in, say, Christine Schäfer's reading of Winterreise (Onyx, ONYX4010).

It is arguably in the more intense passages of these two works that these players are most compelling, though there's no shortage of virtuosity either, particularly in the finale of the Fantasie. As a duo there is much to impress too, not least in their sensitive approach to rubato in the Rondo, one player unerringly mirroring the

other. It's a more introverted reading than that of Batiashvili and Chernyavska, and perhaps more discomfiting as a result.

Last on the disc is the A major Sonata from 1817, a piece that breathes a quite different air. It was here that I could have imagined a warmer, richer violin sound (Kagan, for instance, refulgent alongside Richter) and in places a lightening of mood, wit even. But it's still a highly reactive, involving interpretation and a reminder of the riches that Schubert bequeathed to the violin.

Harriet Smith

Rondo – selected comparison:
Batiashvili, Chernyavska (8/01) (EMI) 574017-2
Sonata – selected comparison:
Kagan, Richter (LIVE) LCL172

Schumann

Violin Sonatas - No 1, Op 105; No 2, Op 121; No 3, WoO2 **Ulf Wallin** Vri **Roland Pöntinen** pf BIS © BIS-SACD1784 (74' • DDD/DSD)



Wallin follows his Schumann concertos with the sonatas

Only a matter of months after the appearance of his fine recording of Schumann's Violin Concerto (2/12), Ulf Wallin now turns his attention to the violin sonatas. Of the three, the masterpiece (if any there be) is the Second, composed in autumn 1851, shortly after the First, with which Schumann expressed his dissatisfaction. The Third is from a couple

of years later and is a work in which some hear all too apparently the disintegration of Schumann's sanity; indeed, some violinists refuse to perform it, feeling that it does the composer's reputation no favours.

Wallin's clearest rival in this repertoire is Carolin Widmann with the pianist Dénes Várjon on ECM, praised by Duncan Druce for 'an expressive flexibility that's surely authentic'. Comparing them side by side, Wallin is a touch more outgoing in comparison to Widmann's compelling inwardness of expression. Wallin's tempi are broader almost everywhere (although the finale of the First Sonata goes with a terrific swing), but he captures ideally the turbulence of the First Sonata, so reminiscent of the sound world of the First Piano Trio, and the irresistible drive of the Second's Lebhaft. The balance with the piano of Roland Pöntinen seems natural: where Widmann's tone occasionally becomes subsumed within the piano (the wondrous pizzicato third movement of the Second Sonata, for example), Wallin's always cuts through. He's more liberal with vibrato, too, while Widmann favours clarity over continuous beauty - which is by no means to the music's detriment. Wallin and Pöntinen perform the supposedly troublesome Third Sonata with a seriousness of intent that reveals its many virtues. But Widmann does that too: so honours will have to be even between the two recordings. Those for whom Widmann's recording was something of a revelation will find these works illuminated dramatically differently by Wallin and Pöntinen.

The curious should not be displeased with either recording; lovers of this music will surely make shelf-space for both. **David Threasher**

Selected comparison – coupled as above: Widmann, Várjon (A/08) (ECM) 476 6744

'A Tribute to Ralph Holmes'

Bartók Sonata for Solo Violin^b Bax Violin Sonata
No 3ª Beethoven Violin Sonata No 5, 'Spring', Op 24ª
Delius Lullaby for a Modern Baby
Ralph Holmes Vrp ªPeter Dickinson pf
Heritage ∰ HTGCD228 (70' • DDD)

ªBroadcast live from Walter Moberly Hall, Keele
University, February 9, 1981;

bFrom Argo ▼ ZK36 (3/78)



Assembled performances from a giant of British string playing

The violinist Ralph Holmes had a unique position among virtuosos of his generation but his early death in 1984 at the age of 47 left us with all too few mementos of his artistry. This Heritage disc, mainly drawn from live BBC broadcasts, fills an important gap, giving some idea of the breadth of his repertory, not only in the classics (he gave several hundred performances of Beethoven's Violin Concerto) but in 20th-century music too.

Aided by the crisp playing of Peter Dickinson, he gives a winningly fresh account of Beethoven's *Spring* Sonata, with a slow movement movingly delivered in hushed tension, a beautifully sprung account of the brief *Scherzo* and free-flowing accounts of the outer movements.

Bartók's Solo Violin Sonata (remastered from a 1977 Argo recording), was written for Yehudi Menuhin in 1944, when Bartók, as an exile in New York, was seriously neglected. Holmes plays it with seeming ease; if the result may seem on a small scale and lacking a little in tension, that is largely a question of the rather backward recording balance. What matters is that every note is crystal clear, making evident Bartók's mastery.

Bax's Third Violin Sonata was written for the Hungarian-born violinist Emil Telmányi in 1927 and is in two substantial movements. Typically, the three main themes of the first movement have a haunting Celtic flavour, reflecting the composer's love of Ireland and things Irish, while the second movement, described by Dickinson in his note as 'a barbaric dance', has none of the venom of Bartókian examples of musical barbarity but rather an attractive amiability.

The little Delius work which comes as a charming tailpiece is a curiosity. Delius wrote this lullaby as a solo piano piece in 1922 and added an upper melodic line 'to be hummed or played by a violin using a mute'. Altogether, a splendid tribute to Holmes.

Edward Greenfield





Grieg Violin Sonata, Op 8ac Sparre Olsen Six Old Village Songs from Lom, Op 2ac Thoresen Yr, Op 23a Traditional Den vande låtten (The Tricky Tune)b. Halling på låg bas (Halling on Low Bass)b. Huldrelått frå Vang (Hulder Tune from Vang)b. Mehanken (The Gnat)b

Ragnhild Hemsing avn/bhardanger fiddle

^cTor Espen Aspaas pf

Simax ® PSC1315 (58' • DDD)
Includes bonus video track of *Yr*



Solo debut from genre-crossing Norwegian fiddler and violinist

Ragnhild Hemsing stands out even in the crowded market of young (she is just 23), attractive and photogenic female violinists. She impressed enormously last year in the *Fossegrimen* suite on Chandos's third volume of Halvorsen (6/11). Her tone is remarkably pure, with an inner steel audible in her control of intonation over larger spans. Her playing reminds me of Ibragimova; it would be interesting to hear how she would tackle Bach.

For her debut solo disc she stays close to home, most obviously in her inclusion of four traditional Norwegian tunes, all based to varying degrees on the styles of older hardanger fiddlers, including two former teachers, Trygve Bolstad and Harald Røine. The virtuosity of Hemsing's unaccompanied playing seems effortless, her strength and delicacy evident equally in Den vande låtten ('The Tricky Tune'), Sparre Olsen's delightful Six Old Village Songs from Lom (1928) and Grieg's First Sonata. Sparre Olsen was a pupil of Hindemith and Valen, and his suite is a model of craftsmanship: try the tiny storm in the Allegretto fourth song. The Grieg - watch for the abrupt stylistic gear-change after Mehanken ('The Gnat')! - is given a vivid, youthful, poised account, at least a match for the competition listed below (albeit Dumay and Pires remain first choice).

The threads are drawn together in the title-track, Lasse Thoresen's Yr (1991), a 13-minute fantasia based on folk material and the gorrlaus tuning (F-C-A-E) used in the preceding Huldrelått frå Vang. The typically ambiguous title (which can mean 'drizzle', 'excitement' or 'teeming') gives few hints as to the music's remarkable character, which takes in elements of French spectralism and microtonality. In the bonus video, directed by Anja Stabell, Yr is 'staged' shamanistically (shawomanistically?) by the mesmeric Hemsing and extremely nimble Hallgrim Hansegård. Excellent sound. Guy Rickards

Grieg – selected comparisons:

Dumay, Pires (9/93) (DG) 437 525-2GH Shaham, Erez (9/06) (HYPE) CDA67504 Van Keulen, Brautigam (1/08) (CHAL) CC72171

GRAMOPHONE Archive

Schumann's Violin Sonatas

Placing Wallin and Pöntinen's recording in context with a look at the archives



DECEMBER 2000

Isabelle Faust vn Silke Avenhaus pf CPO © CP0999 597-2

The first movement of Sonata No 3 begins with dangerous reminders of its D minor predecessor. But these two youngish German artists at once banish all thoughts of a tired mind on the verge of breakdown. Everything comes up with arresting immediacy, the *Scherzo* interlaced with moments of Viennese charm, the slow movement played with touching *Innigkeit*, and the finale, not least its brilliant home-coming, in triumphant elation.

Nor is there a dull moment elsewhere. With their unflagging urgency in faster movements and emphatic point-making, Faust and Avenhaus might even be thought a shade too highly strung for this particular German composer. I certainly enjoyed their simplicity in the chorale-inspired slow movement of the D minor work more than their slightly self-conscious coquetry in the *Allegretto* of the First Sonata. But always their playing suggests strong personal commitment. *Joan Chissell*



JUNE 2007 Jennifer Koh vn Reiko Uchida pf

Jennifer Koh vn Reiko Uchida p Cedille © CDR90000 095

Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin made a definitive recording of Sonata No 1 and I don't say that lightly, because two of Busch's most recent rivals, this version by the youthful duo of Jennifer Koh and Reiko Uchida and an earlier release by violinist Isabelle Faust and pianist Silke Avenhaus (see above), are similarly eloquent, if not quite as distinctive. In all three works, Koh and Uchida favour a more classical approach whereas Faust commands the wider range of shades and colours. Koh and Uchida play the Third Sonata with a compassionate heart and a cool head though I doubt that even their compelling advocacy would bring it much nearer to standard repertory. It's far too uncomfortable for that. The recordings are excellent. Rob Cowan



FEBRUARY 1996 Mark Kaplan *vn* Anton Kuerti *pf*

Arabesque © CDZ6662

The violin emerges favourably in the two familiar, earlier sonatas, especially in the lighter-textured urgency of the A minor work. Some of the bigger, bolder gestures of its more vehement D minor successor might have benefited from tone a little riper, more full-bodied, than Kaplan's clean, lean sound. But his playing is as lithe in finger as in mind. I particularly enjoyed both artists' sensitivity in the slow movements, even if their reactions to middle section indications like bewegter and etwas lebhafter might perhaps be thought a little too sudden. Joan Chissell

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Instrumental



Jed Distler reviews Beethoven from HJ Lim:

'She employs "old school" devices like rolling chords that critics accept more from dead pianists than living ones' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 98



Bryce Morrison reviews Medtner from Hamish Milne:

With grandeur and eloquence, Milne speaks to you of music which tugs at and haunts the imagination' ▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 98

JS Bach

'Organ Works, Vol 7'

Chorale Partita 'O Gott, du frommer Gott', BWV767. Chorale Preludes - Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend. BWV709; Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend, BWV726; Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend, BWV749; Herr Jesu Christ, meines Lebens Licht, BWV750; Ich hab' mein Sach' Gott heimgestellt, BWV707; Ich hab' mein Sach' Gott heimgestellt, BWV708; Jesu, der du meine Seele, BWV752; Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV706; Nun ruhen alle Wälder, BWV756; O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig, BWV1085; O Vater, allmächtiger Gott, BWV758; Vater unser im Himmelreich, BWV762: Wir Christenleut habn jetz und Freud, BWV710; Wir glauben all' an einen Gott, BWV765. Fantasia, BWV570. Fuga sopra 'Durch Adams Fall ist ganz vederbt', BWV705; Fuga sopra il Magnificat, BWV733. Fugues - BWV575; BWV576; BWV580; BWV581; BWV946. Kleines harmonisches Labyrinth, BWV591. Organ Concertos - BWV594 (after Vivaldi); BWV597. Passacaglia, BWV582. Preludes - BWV568; BWV943. Preludes and Fugues - BWV541; BWV546; BWV551; BWV567. Trio. BWV1027a

Margaret Phillips org

Regent © @ REGCD308 (146' • DDD) Played on the organs of St Jacobikirche, Sangerhausen, and Petrikirche, Freiberg



Bach for two manuals and pedals in Phillips's seventh set

For their latest foray into the multifaceted world of Bach's organ music, Margaret Phillips and her engineer and producer Gary Cole ventured to a pair of historically correct but nicely contrasted and generously endowed two-manual instruments situated in the heart of Germany with close connections to Bach. This two-CD set encompasses a wide range of music, much of it on a small scale, some of it of spurious attribution, and with fewer of the great 'blockbuster' pieces than on previous instalments of this excellent series. The playing throughout is of the highest order, even in Bach's lesser moments, such as the fughettas on Herr Jesu Christ and Nun ruhen alle Wälder.

The first disc - which makes a highly satisfying programme in its own right opens with a sparkling account of the

G major Prelude and Fugue (BWV541). The succession of chorale preludes has been ordered into a typically judicious and satisfying mixture of keys and tempi. Although the full organ is given plenty of exposure, there are many moments of delicate colouring in Miss Phillip's registrations.

The second disc has perhaps slightly less programmatic coherence. However, the mighty golden Passacaglia in C minor (BWV582) makes a splendid conclusion, complete with 32-foot underpinnings. Among several gems are the extraordinary Kleines harmonisches Labyrinth, BWV591 (which was passed on via Mozart, no less), the dancing Trio in G, BWV1027a, and the limpid recitativo centre of the après-Vivaldi Concerto in C. This is another artistic and engineering success and a benchmark of musical integrity. Malcolm Riley

JS Bach · Britten · Ligeti

JS Bach Solo Cello Suite No 6, BWV1012 Britten Solo Cello Suite No 3, Op 87 Ligeti Solo Cello Sonata Miklós Perényi vc ECM New Series (F) 476 4166 (58' • DDD)



Hungarian cellist Perényi drawing Rostropovich threads

In what feels a bit like a 'taster' disc (which doesn't do justice to music performed with this much authority) intended to showcase the cello - its sonorities, range and colour - it is tempting to try to find a thread running through it to add some credibility. Here, it looks like it might be Rostropovich: Britten dedicated his Suites to him; Bach's Suites are still synonymous with him, and Ligeti although Hungarian, like Perényi - was subjected to similar lines of censorship over a similar period. And, in many ways, Perényi's playing has something of Rostropovich about it - muscular and expansive, with tightly disciplined drive.

The disc opens with Britten's Third Cello Suite, which can be hard to engage with in the knowledge that it was completed in a week, but that hardly seems important here. Perényi concentrates on the sonorities of the instrument, treating the colours it makes as

independent of Britten's hurriedly written notes, doing such justice to it in his warm, old-school playing that he manages to pull the threads of Britten, Rostropovich, his own musical heritage and the Bach Suites together so minutely that it is impossible not to apprehend the point he is trying to make about the instrument.

My only quibble is that in this single-minded ambition to bring us shoulder-to-shoulder with the cello's tone and colour it can become a little implacable in its presentation. But the integrity in Perényi's playing is so strong that if you choose to leave it over taking it, you'll be much the poorer. Caroline Gill

JS Bach · Schubert

'Something Almost Being Said' JS Bach Partitas - No 1, BWV825; No 2, BWV826 Schubert Four Impromptus, D899 Simone Dinnerstein pf

Sony (F) 88697 99824-2 (76° • DDD)



Dinnerstein references Larkin with Bach and Schubert

Central to Simone Dinnerstein's recording ambitions is a kind of reflective Bach-playing which, with or without Larkin's line 'Something almost being said' as a marketing ploy, will divide the critics. Her Bachian utterances also serve here as a framing stimulus towards the rapt stillness and presence of her Schubert Impromptus.

Past detractors have alighted on mannerisms, painfully slow tempi and controlled deliberation, and the same can, to a certain extent, be said here. Starting with the last (which is usually first), the First Partita is a performance which requires some serious acclimatising - though acclimatising to what, I'm not sure. Accepting Dinnerstein's priority for a forthright and productive tone, the sense of 'a powerful narrative and vocal element' (to which she aspires) completely suffocates the ideals of light, wit and spark in a vision of great solemnity but one with a distinct shortage of personality and dimension. This is a very slow performance which doubtless could inspire a clear rationale in a few pianists' hands but not in these.

To uncover new possibilities in Bach, one needs rather more than a seamless meditative

line in the Sarabande, studiously even and portentous Minuets and a glassy, stalling Gigue. Beyond admirably steady and controlled calibrations, Dinnerstein offers considerably more in the Second Partita. The Sinfonia unfolds elegantly, the Sarabande is especially genial, the Minuets are lifted quirkily and the Gigue provides a surprisingly bucolic romp.

The Schubert-playing is intermittently thoughtful but lumpy. The E flat Second Impromptu is impressively resonant but over-regulated in the figuration. The consistently heavy and serious 'tone' throughout yields rarely to expressive variety or palpable depth of sentiment. A rather enervating experience overall.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

JS Bach

Six Cello Suites, BWV1007-12 (arr Caussé). interspersed with extracts from the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke

Gérard Caussé va Laurent Terzieff reciter Virgin Classics (M 2) 907665-2 (159' • DDD)



The Bach Suites on a viola and readings from actor Terzieff

This recording is very much aimed at the French market. The viola player Gérard Caussé and the late actor Laurent Terzieff are much-loved French cultural icons. For Caussé, Terzieff 'was the man who breathed life into each of the Bach Suites'. Caussé invited Terzieff to contribute readings to his recording and the actor would seem to have chosen works by Rilke that resonated with both his life and his impending death. Rilke in French, just as Bach Cello Suites on the viola, is an easily acquired taste, especially in these hands. Nevertheless, this slightly unlikely pairing gives the impression of being 'once-removed'.

And so to the music. This is not, of course, a period performance. Caussé freely indulges in rubato, treads warily through the chordal passages and is sparing with ornamentation. The rubato is most successful in the expansive preludes and less so in the smaller-scale movements styled as dances, with some notable exceptions including the Sarabande of the Fifth Suite. The quadruple- and triple-stops are repeatedly broken and thereby denied the warmth one feels Bach intended. Ornamentation is, of course, up to the player, but its addition would have enriched the faithfully observed repeats. I found Caussé's interpretation of the Third Suite most challenging, for all the aforementioned reasons and because he wasn't always at ease with Baroque temperament (for example, the tuning of the passage of thirds in the Allemande and the flat F sharps in the Sarabande and Gigue). Julie Anne Sadie



Schubert in the shadow of Bach: Simone Dinnerstein

JS Bach

Six Cello Suites, BWV1007-12 Richard Tunnicliffe vc Linn ® 2 . CKD396 (137' • DDD/DSD)



Bach's Cello Suites from Fretwork's bassist Tunnicliffe

As with the Solo Sonatas and Partitas for violin, people tend to ally themselves to one particular recording of the Cello Suites and stick with it for a lifetime, angrily defending it against any upstarts that presume to have anything new to say. This is probably to do with the extraordinary complexity of the internal conversations in all these pieces the counterpoint yields so many musical discourses that the possibilities for them to mean different things to different people are endless.

In his debut solo disc (strange but true why has this not happened before?), Richard Tunnicliffe never loses sight of these dialogues and you hear a different one each time you visit it. In fact, this is one of the beauties of the disc - one day it can feel a bit de trop, like a wall of sound presenting the transcendent musical genius of the Suites as mutually exclusive to their ability to move the listener on a human level; another, the warmth of Tunnicliffe's tone

and self-evident, painstaking thought behind every phrase can bring you even closer to this beautiful music. In fact, this intellectual connection with the music is the strongest selling point of Tunnicliffe's recording and more than enough to carry you through the (very) occasional hard times when the general sound can feel a bit relentless, the phrases a little too chopped-up to feel the glorious inevitability of Bach's harmonic progression and the fact that, despite their musical gravitas, in the end these are all just dance movements.

The overriding feeling of this collection, though, is of that warmth. You can hear the long, smooth bowing supporting every line like a deep breath holds the words for a singer, yet he still manages to present the lightness of touch and separation of notes that Bach undoubtedly intended for these pieces. He also brings to it the soaring joy it needs, rather than the flat-and-straining timbre so many other recordings have failed to avoid. For those who like their Bach honest and unrefined, this is probably the most appealing recording of these pieces since Anner Bylsma's sublime second version of 1992.

Caroline Gill

Selected comparison: Bylsma (1/93) (SONY) S2K48047

Beethoven

'Complete Piano Sonatas, Vol 1' Piano Sonatas - No 4, Op 7; No 9, Op 14 No 1; No 10, Op 14 No 2; No 11, Op 22; No 13, Op 27 No 1; No 14, 'Moonlight', Op 27 No 2; No 26, 'Les adieux', Op 81a; No 29, 'Hammerklavier', Op 106 HJ Lim pf

EMI (F) (2) 730009-2 (151' • DDD)



Korean makes EMI debut with Beethoven sonata cycle launch

When it comes to Beethoven's complete survey of piano sonatas on disc, EMI appears to take risks. After all, they launched Schnabel's pioneering cycle in the 1930s and placed bets on behalf of a young, promising pianist named Daniel Barenboim with his first Beethoven cycle in the late '60s.

Fast-forward nearly a half-century later to EMI's latest contract player, 24-year-old Korean HJ Lim, whose own Beethoven cycle will appear this year starting with this doubledisc release. Judging from the cycle's first instalment, Lim herself is something of a risktaker. In general, she favours fast tempi and textures that are clear and taut to the point of being overly dry. At the same time, she sometimes employs 'old school' devices like rolling chords and breaking hands that critics accept more from dead pianists than living ones, although the purity of the string quartetlike textures in the Allegretto of the Moonlight Sonata falls by the wayside as a result.

Lim likes to pull unexpected rubatos and hard-hitting accents out of the proverbial hat, toeing that fine line between expressive and mannered. For example, there's her overly coy phrasing of the main theme of Op 22's Rondo: Allegretto, yet the pianist's rhythmic liberties enhance the whimsy characterising the scampering upward scales and dramatic silences of Op 14 No 2's Scherzo assai. The Les adieux Sonata's outer movements boast tremendous sweep and brio, yet every once in a while an elongated cadence or exaggerated accompanimental figure draws more attention to Lim than to Beethoven. Conversely, the expanding and contracting phrases of Op 14 No 1's Allegretto befit an underlying passion and intensity that many pianists otherwise flatten out. Lim possesses the finger power to carry out Beethoven's optimistically fast metronome markings in the Hammerklavier Sonata and the brainpower to make them sound plausible, if not necessarily pleasing. For example, the Adagio sostenuto's long, intricately wrought right-hand cantabiles barely have room to breathe. By contrast, Lim begins the finale's fugue with breathless lightness, yet her basic tempo gradually slows down as the movement unfolds. However, the comparably notegobbling finales of the two Op 27 sonatas prove more consistently brisk, supple and even jazzy

in their demeanour. Lim's long-lined concentration and superb legato control in Op 7's slow movement show that she can play simply and directly when she chooses. However one responds to these often exciting though sometimes wrong-headed performances, there's no doubting Lim's strong personality and fervent commitment. Jed Distler

Chopin

Four Ballades. Barcarolle, Op 60. Berceuse, Op 57. Nocturnes - No 2, Op 9 No 2; No 4, Op 15 No 1; No 5, Op 15 No 2; No 6, Op 15 No 3; No 13, Op 48 No 1; No 15, Op 55 No 1

Louis Lortie pf

Chandos (F) CHAN10714 (75' • DDD)



Vol 2 of Louis Lortie's Chandos Chopin project

For the second volume of his Chopin cycle, Louis Lortie prefaces major pieces such as the Four Ballades with Nocturnes, contrasting a sense of improvisation with weightier, more concentrated works. And throughout his recital you will hear playing of the most patrician poise, fluidity and tonal finesse. Even Chopin's most violent nerve-storms, while fully acknowledged, are seen within a lucid and contained perspective. There is drama and passion but never violence or neurosis, and even those accustomed to a more volatile view (from Cortot or Argerich, for example) will surely agree that Lortie's balance of sense and sensibility - of Slavic intensity and Gallic grace – is impeccable.

In the Op 9 E flat Nocturne, his rubato has all the delicacy and fragrance of a born Chopin pianist, a subtle give and take and musical breathing. His way with the Berceuse in particular is a marvel of iridescence, unruffled technique and musicianship. As one critic put it, 'He is forever colouring, shading, emphasising, minutely adjusting', and the result is personal but never egocentric. A celebrated English pianist was once described as 'a virtuoso of dreaming'. The same could be said of Louis Lortie.

Bryce Morrison

Medtner





Stimmungsbilder, Op 1. Three Improvisations, Op 2. Four Morceaux, Op 4. Three Arabesques, Op 7. Three Dithyrambs, Op 10. Three Novelles, Op 17. Four Lyric Fragments, Op 23. Three Morceaux, Op 31. Three Hymns in Praise of Toil, Op 49. Theme and Variations, Op 55. Two Elegies, Op 59. Etude in C minor

Hamish Milne of

Hyperion © @ CDA67851/2 (158' • DDD)



Medtner-Milne partnership in the 'short' piano works

Here is a declaration of musical faith if ever there was one. No pianist has done more for Medtner's reputation than Hamish Milne and on this two-CD set of shorter works, following on from the complete Skazki (a finalist in the 2007 Gramophone Awards), he tells you that a still neglected and misunderstood composer demands to be heard. Medtner may have been described as a 'Russian Brahms' or, slightly more truthfully, a 'Russian Schumann', but in the end he remains an indelibly Russian if entirely personal voice. Greatly admired by Rachmaninov and part of the repertoires of pianists such as Moiseiwitsch, Gilels and Horowitz (though largely in private), Medtner is too unsettling and lacking in obvious appeal to be popular; yet, time and again, Milne, with his awe-inspiring grandeur and eloquence, speaks to you of music which tugs at and haunts the imagination.

Try the third of the Three Arabesques (Allegro inquieto ma al rigore di tempo), a relentless moto perpetuo inhabiting a world of nightmare, and then listen to the second of the Three Dithyrambs, where hymnic splendour explodes in frenzied complexity and a massive carillon of Moscow bells. What wild capering in the Scherzo infernale from Op 2 and how arresting the pianistic layout in the First Improvisation, where Milne far excels Earl Wild's dazzling but musically more superficial reading. The Three Hymns in Praise of Toil tell of the breaking of dawn, a day's work and an evening's celebration in memorably evocative style and Milne's playing will surely make Russians, in particular, listen in awe to such magisterial command and poetic empathy. Previous recordings of some of these pieces by the same pianist for CRD (10/99; 4/00) are now excelled in breadth and wonder, and Hyperion's sound is incomparably superior. Milne writes his own superb notes, and this is surely in the running for instrumental issue of the year. Bryce Morrison

Ysaÿe



Six Solo Violin Sonatas, Op 27

Tai Murray vn Harmonia Mundi (F) HMU90 7569 (69' • DDD)



New signing for Harmonia Mundi: Chicago violinist Murray

Ysaÿe dedicated each of these sonatas to a different, then-famous, performer-friend, and each is wildly different in character as a result. Running through all of them is his rapacious interest in the relationship between his influences, and everything is thrown into the melting pot - Debussy, jazz, folk - resulting in a disc that makes me want to hear Tai Murray playing all of them, so coherently has she pulled them together.

Above all, though, the ghost of Bach is never far from these pieces and it takes a weighty

player to support his presence in the wings without leaving the music to lose its own identity. So much of the Solo Partitas is in here, and the yearning Murray creates by way of her seamless lines is heart-wrenching: she has quite rightly identified them as all-important in music that can kaleidoscope from post-Bach to pre-Ligeti sounds within a single phrase, managing to draw out just how exciting this music is in its own right from a repertoire where it is often pigeonholed as niche study music for the advanced student.

In recorded music these days it ought to go without saying that all these performances are perfectly tuned but I'm going to draw attention to it anyway: the perfection of Murray's intonation, especially in the many virtuoso passages of fast-moving, random intervals of no predictable pattern, has tipped so far over into another league of accuracy that it adds an extra dimension of enjoyment to an already superlative disc. Caroline Gill

'Baroque Conversations'

Rameau Gavotte et six doubles Feldman Piano
Piece for Philip Guston Soler Sonata No 84
F Couperin Les barricades mystérieuses Porat
WHAAM! Handel Suite, HWV447 Froberger
Tombeau de Monsieur Blancrocher Sahar Aux
murailles rougies Gibbons Lord Salisbury's Pavan
and Galliard Frescobaldi Toccata di durezze e
ligature Lachenmann Wiegenmusik Sweelinck
Mein junges Leben hat ein End

 $\textbf{David Greilsammer}\, pf$

Sony Classical (£) 88697 92969-2 (60' • DDD)



More old-new mirror games from Israeli pianist Greilsammer

Just as David Greilsammer's 'fantaisie_ fantasme' (Naïve, 12/07) alternated old and new music according to a mirror-like symmetrical game plan, 'Baroque Conversations' adheres to similar programming precepts. Greilsammer assembles four 'minisets', each containing three works. The first and third pieces are by Baroque keyboard composers, while the second is by a late-20th- or early-21st-century composer. Usually such programming ideas seem pretentious or sound forced but Greilsammer's stylistic juxtapositions mostly work. For example, his delicately nuanced performance of Rameau's Gavotte et six doubles slips easily into the short and sparse textures of Feldman's 1963 Piano Piece for Philip Guston, whose soft terrain suddenly gets stampeded by the upbeat virtuosity of Soler's Sonata No 84 in D. By contrast, Greilsammer's animated and relaxed reading of Couperin's Les barricades mystérieuses doesn't hint at the loud, thick chords and flourishes that open Matan Porat's WHAAM!, yet the latter's soft passages and jazzy, aphoristic arabesques eventually relate to

Handel's D minor Suite that follows, especially in the unusually drawn-out yet well-sustained Sarabande.

One might be pressed to find a plausible tie between the pointillistic writing and skilfully textured repeated-note sequences throughout Nimrod Sahar's Aux murailles rougies and Greilsammer's stately, eloquently shaped Froberger and Gibbons performances that surround it. However, I should add that the pianist's fast tempo and hair-trigger articulation in Gibbons's galliard yields nothing to Glenn Gould's breathtaking recording (Sony, 11/93). Selections by Frescobaldi and Sweelinck beautifully bookend Greilsammer's translucent way with Lachenmann's Wiegenmusik, which differs from Pierre-Laurent Aimard's slower, more aggressive and dynamically contrasted traversal (Accord). In all, a stimulating, outstandingly executed and superbly engineered programme.

Jed Distler

'Journey'

Chopin Ballade No 4, Op 52 **Debussy** Deux Arabesques. L'isle joyeuse **Elgar** Salut d'amour, Op 12 **Grieg** Lyric Pieces – Book 3, Op 43 **Mozart** Piano Sonata No 17, K570 **Lü Wencheng** Autumn moon over a calm lake **He Luting** Shepherd boy playing his little flute **Bi-Guang Tang** Liuyang River **Di Xiao** of

Ecstasy (F) 11DX01 (69' • DDD)



Solo debut from a Birmingham Conservatoire high-flyer

Di Xiao is a young Chinese pianist whose disc entitled 'Journey' ranges far and wide through a 'those she loves' repertoire. Sadly, whether in Mozart or Grieg, Chopin or Debussy, her performances, while proficient at one level, are too generalised to catch a sense of wonder or leave the printed page.

True, she momentarily breaks free of her safety zone in the final build-ups of Chopin's Fourth Ballade and Debussy's L'isle joyeuse but even here there is too little texture, luminous sound and balance of parts. Her way with the two Arabesques is too open-ended and impersonal to capture much of Debussy's early evanescent magic and in Grieg's 'Butterfly' her tired and lethargic reading is a far cry from, say, Eileen Joyce's vertiginous brilliance, wit and charm (recently reissued on APR's five-CD album - 12/11). A blatant start to 'To the spring' does little for that poetic gem and, although there are three charming tributes to her native China, Di Xiao's performance of Elgar's arrangement of Salut d'amour, which she describes as 'one of the sweetest little melodies ever', is again limited in both style and pianism. Ecstasy Records' sound lacks warmth, adding to the effect of a dispiriting rather than enlightening journey. Bryce Morrison



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Voca



Fabrice Fitch reviews Nørholm from Else Torp:

In the modernist pieces her straight tone allows for clarity, while the tonal ones admit of judicious vibrato' > REVIEW ON PAGE 104



Peter Quantrill on Tudor and Jacobean music from Stile Antico:

'Their sleek tuning and supple attention to words bring a carefully plotted span of sacred styles' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 108

JS Bach

'Cantatas, Vol 50'

Cantatas - No 49, Ich geh und suche mit Verlangen; No 145, Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen; No 149, Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg; No 174, Ich liebe den Höchsten von ganzem Gemüte

Hana Blažíková sop Robin Blaze counterten

Gerd Türk ten Peter Kooij bass

Bach Collegium Japan / Masaaki Suzuki



Suzuki's Bach cycle reaches the half-century with late cantatas

The half-century volume of this most considered of Bach cantata series reaches that point, late in the journey, where only a fraction of Bach's last cycle survives. The three works from the end of 1728 and 1729 are characterised by Bach's perceptible move towards an economy of means, often catalysed by revisiting older pieces, even if the opening movement of Brandenburg Concerto No 3 (in BWV174) is now furnished with additional forces.

The most original fruits appear in BWV149 and 174, the first celebrating the feisty and emboldened St Michael, who Bach famously depicts beating up the devil in BWV19 from the first Leipzig cycle. Here, trumpets are in the front line (revisiting material from his secular Hunt Cantata from 1713 but it's the concise and Enlightenment-infused arias which capture both Bach's and Suzuki's imagination. Hana Blažíková delivers a clarion brightness in the fragrant minuet 'Gottes Engel weichen nie', very much in the elegant Collegium Bach Japan vein: luminosity and purity of sentiment prevailing above an overlaid or projected personality.

These cantatas abound in that most exquisite of Bachian set-pieces, the duet. Both divulge how Bach imbues a text with irresistible presence (as in the opening of BWV145, an Easter Day cantata, between Jesus and the Soul) or reflects an inhabited discipleship, as in the delectable duet of BWV149, where Robin Blaze and Gerd Türk circumnavigate an encouraging obbligato bassoon, watching for dawn with renewed vigour.

If chronologically out of sync, BWV49 from 1726 comfortably joins the later trio of works

with another distinguished sinfonia reworking - the last movement of what was to become the E major Harpsichord Concerto in the 1730s, dazzlingly played by Suzuki on the organ. Jesus and the Soul appear again, especially beguilingly in the final movement of a duetting chorale (How lovely shines the morning star!) intriguingly wrapped round an obbligato organ. It is simply one of Bach's finest hidden treasures. If Christophe Coin's recording remains special in its organ-loft intimacy, rugged fervour and brilliance spring off the page here. Another memorable release.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

BWV49 - selected comparison: Coin, Ens Baroque de Limoges (NAIV) E8926

Blackford

Not in Our Time

Paul Nilon ten Stephen Gadd bar

Bournemouth Youth Chorus; Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra / Gavin Carr Nimbus Alliance (F) NI6161 (54' • DDD • T/t)



Blackford's pacifist oratorio for Dorset choir's centenary

Blackford's third major choral and orchestral work will, I feel sure, be quickly added to that illustrious lineage of pacifist works such as Bliss's Morning Heroes, Vaughan Williams's Dona nobis pacem and Michael Berkeley's Or Shall We Die. This quasi-oratorio, cast in six major parts, explores the themes of human and spiritual conflict, and how religion is used as the pretext for war.

Commissioned by the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus for its 2011 centenary, Not in Our Time was first performed on the 10th anniversary of 9/11. Blackford fearlessly juxtaposes 21st-century texts (George W Bush's 'War on Terror' battle cry and Barack Obama's hope for the future through mutual understanding) with 11th-century crusading clamourings for holy war as well as a description of an anonymous 'jumper' from the World Trade Center. Threaded through the piece are several musical treatments of Hilda Doolittle's poem 'Not in our time, O Lord'.

As one might expect from a composer so steeped in music for the theatre, this piece has

a strongly filmic feel, with shades of Herrmann, Shostakovich and Walton. There are nods, too, to Janáček (in the 'God's Will' section) and to Howells (in the hymn 'Lucis largitor splendide'). The two choruses cope splendidly with their taxing music.

Paul Nilon's excessively rapid and wide vibrato causes a loss of clarity, unlike Stephen Gadd's firm and warm tone. Gavin Carr draws sumptuously rich playing from his Bournemouth players, with the full tutti thrillingly underpinned by Christopher Dowie's organ-playing. Malcolm Rilev

Brahms





Schicksalslied, Op 54. Alto Rhapsody, Op 53a. Warum ist das Licht gegeben, Op 74 No 1. Begräbnisgesang, Op 13. Gesang der Parzen, Op 89 ^aAnn Hallenberg contr Collegium Vocale, Ghent; Champs-Elysées Orchestra / Philippe Herreweghe PHI (E) LPHOO3 (57" • DDD • T/t)



Herreweghe and his Ghent singers in choral Brahms

Created last year expressly for conductor Philippe Herreweghe to explore on disc his wide-ranging musicological and interpretative interests, the PHI label has now reached its third release. Hot on the heels of Mahler and Bach comes Brahms's music for chorus and orchestra, an area of his output scandalously under-represented in the catalogues.

Wading through the booklet-notes, which begin rather nicely with Schumann's comment about music for chorus and orchestra being 'the highest expression of music' but then delve into increasingly incomprehensible commentary, one might be forgiven for thinking that these are hardly the most accessible of works. We read that the 16-minute Schicksalslied is 'problematical for the listener'. If so, Herreweghe has unravelled the problems and laid out for us a superbly rich and eloquent example of Brahms's art at its most sublime. The profound tranquillity of the outer sections is magically countered by the high drama of the central section in a way which is wholly unproblematical. Collegium Vocale Gent deliver the unaccompanied motet

Warum ist das Licht gegeben with great breadth and an at times awesome dynamic range which perfectly matches the intensity of the text, and Herreweghe allows the music to evolve with a wonderful feeling of spaciousness in which Brahms's often intense musical textures are beautifully revealed.

My only reservation with the choral singing is the very hard-edged tone the men produce in the opening stanza of the Begräbnisgesang, where they try too hard to blend in with the accompaniment bassoons and trombones, but they more than redeem themselves with their lovely, comforting tone supporting, along with a delectably rich Orchestre des Champs-Elysées, Ann Hallenberg's ravishing performance of the Alto Rhapsody. PHI has shown considerable discretion in not giving this headline billing, for not only is it the most popular work on the disc but it is also a performance which stands head and shoulders above much of the competition. It is very much the icing on a mouth-wateringly sumptuous cake of a disc. Marc Rochester

Brahms · Schütz





Brahms Ein deutsches Requiem, Op 45^a Schütz Selig sind die Totenb. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen^b ^aKatharine Fuge sop ^aMatthew Brook bar Monteverdi Choir; Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique / John Fliot Gardiner Soli Deo Gloria (F) SDG706 (77" • DDD • T/t) Recorded live at the bRoyal Festival Hall, London, and Salle Pleyel, Paris, October-November 2007; ^aUsher Hall, Edinburgh, August 2008



Gardiner and his groups with a second look at the Requiem

John Eliot Gardiner first recorded the German Requiem in 1990, one of the first discs with his then newly formed Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. That studio recording was as remarkable for Gardiner's monumental conception of the work as it was for a certain degree of mannerism affectation occasionally usurping affection. He returns to the work 18 years later in a live performance from Usher Hall, Edinburgh, presenting what is recognisably a similar interpretation while at the same time demonstrating a root-and-branch rethink of the work's very sound: a reconsideration of the warp and weft of the fabric from which it is made. This is palpable right from the start: in the viol-like sonorities of the violas; in a fastidiously researched approach to portamento (there's a corker at the beginning of 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen'); and in a recording that is spacious enough (while not approaching the analytical clarity of the Philips disc) to let Brahms's distinctly Germanic harpwriting glow like a halo across the whole work.

Gardiner is acutely aware, too, of the importance to the Requiem's tinta of Brahms's finely crafted writing for the brass and timpani.

Of course, the seismic event that occurred roughly equidistant between that earlier recording and the appearance of this one was the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage. One becomes aware of the effect on a musician of undergoing the discipline of preparing what amounts to a weekly act of devotion (whether to God or to music, it doesn't matter), and wonders to what extent this affects his response to a devotional score such as the German Requiem - not only its notes but also text, which is itself an act of devotion, for all Brahms's agnosticism. One also wonders to what extent Gardiner at 65 is a different musician to Gardiner at 47; how his thoughts on the central message of the work have alttered over the near two decades that separate the two recordings; how the still-young firebrand of the early music movement differs from/has grown into/mellowed into the bus-pass-carrying gentleman farmer. Where that earlier recording drove inexorably forwards, this one replaces that occasional relentlessness with urgency: the final movement particularly becomes a heartfelt plea rather than a slow conclusion to a sometimes overlong work.

The soloists too add to this sense of urgency. Matthew Brook may not be the high-cholesterol baritone often favoured in classic recordings of the German Requiem but a hint of reediness in his tone seems appropriate for one yearning to know the measure of his days. Likewise, Katharine Fuge is a less creamy soprano than some great names but again the vulnerability of her tone - notwithstanding the Schwarzkopf gasp mid-phrase before the word 'Traurigkeit' - does not seem out of place, considering what she is actually singing about.

The star of the German Requiem, though, is always the choir. You know you're in safe hands with the Monteverdis and the pitch-perfect top A at 2'04" (a graveyard for many a choral society) absolutely confirms it. They open proceedings with a pair of Schütz choruses setting words Brahms was to use in the Requiem two centuries later and providing the context that was such an integral part of Gardiner's 'Brahms: Roots and Memories' project. Applause is omitted, allowing silent contemplation of the revelation that comes from such a minutely considered, dramatic and, in places, aptly disturbing performance.

David Threasher

Brahms - selected comparison: Monteverdi Ch, ORR, Gardiner (4/91) (PHIL) 432 140-2PH

G Charpentier

Impressions d'Italie. Didon. La vie du poète. La fête des myrtes Manon Feubel, Sabine Devieilhe sops Helena Bohuszewicz contr Julien Dran, Bernard Richter tens

Marc Barrard, Alain Buet bars Flemish Radio Choir: Royal Symphonic Band of the Belgian Guides; Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra / Hervé Niquet Glossa (F) (2) GCD922211 (125' • DDD)



Prix de Rome entries by the 'other' Charpentier

Here are Charpentier's two auditions for the Prix de Rome written in Paris in 1887 and two 'on-site' winner's pieces (Rome 1888/89). They bear witness to a composer not only influenced by Liszt's symphonic poems and their helterskelter attitude to form but an orchestrator especially in his use of brass – with a gift for unusual perspectives and 'offstage' effects. (Here he made common cause with Mahler, who championed Louise at the Vienna Court Opera.) Melodically speaking there appear to be two Charpentiers: the spinner of colourful tunes who anticipates Strauss and Respighi in 'Napoli' (from the 'symphonie pittoresque' Impressions d'Italie) and the economical crafter of leitmotifs in the audition cantata Didon.

Two of the works here pointed to a serious future for Charpentier in opera. 'Ivresse' is the finale to his first Rome score, La vie du poète, which would later become the opera Julien. It shows already the widescreen grip of bustling street scenes of which Charpentier's revered master Massenet and Puccini made a speciality. Didon – a 30-minute opera in all but name – can hold company with Purcell and Berlioz in its treatment of the crisis of conscience that besets Aeneas while out hunting with his newly beloved Dido.

In Didon it is Anchise, the spirit of Enée's father, who reminds the Roman hero of his destiny in 'Italie'. Charpentier's astutely paced building of the scene - from anguished solo for Didon to full-scale trio followed by brief envoi for Didon, a super-economical version of 'Ah, je vais mourir' or 'When I am laid' - cries out for staging, as does the dark colouring of the lower brass as Aeneas admits his conflict of interest. There is little Berlioz-like about Charpentier's writing but it may not be wholly a coincidence that a strong martial motif accompanies all references here to the glory that will become Rome.

Elsewhere, the earlier parts of *Impressions* d'Italie and La vie du poète show off a more traditional side of Charpentier as symphonic poet/melodist, while La fête des myrtes - a premiere both in performance and on disc reveal him to be a cunning choral setter and up-to-date harmonist. As in other issues in this series, the standard of performance under Hervé Niquet and his chosen Belgian soloists and ensembles easily crosses over from archive duty into committed championship. The Brussels and Antwerp recordings are most natural. A huge recommendation, especially for Didon. Mike Ashman

Chopin

19 Polish Songs, Op 74 - No 1, The Wish; No 2, Spring; No 3, The Sad Stream; No 7, The Envoy; No 8, Handsome Lad; No 9, Melodya; No 13, I want what I have not; No 16, Lithuanian Song; No 17, Hymn from the Tomb (each song sung in Polish and German)

Dorothée Mields *sop* **Nelson Goerner** *fp*Fryderyk Chopin Institute (F) NIFCCD023 (51' • DDD)



Chopin songs sung twice: in German and the original Polish

I'm sorry to begin in captious vein, but here goes. Anyone buying this 'blind' might expect 18 different songs. Instead what we get are just nine of the 19 songs Chopin composed spasmodically over two decades, sung both in their Polish originals and in the German translations made after Chopin's death. Even with this double helping of identical music, the total timing is hardly generous; and while there are useful notes by John Allison, the booklet stints on English translations - indispensable with such little-known repertoire. Why, I wonder, didn't the Chopin Institute issue all 19 songs, shared between soprano and baritone, and forget the German versions recorded in the dubious name of 'completeness'?

These gripes aside, the performances are a delight, ideally scaled to these charming (occasionally more than that) shavings from Chopin's workbench. Designed for amateurs rather than opera stars on their nights off, most of the songs are simple strophic settings in the tradition of the French romance, replete with folksong echoes and the lilt of waltz and mazurka. Dorothée Mields's pellucid soprano, verbal sensitivity and unexaggerated response to mood and character make her a well-nigh ideal interpreter, whether of the bittersweet 'The Sad Stream', the incantatory 'I want what I have not', with its mournfully curling melismas, or the two grim threnodies for the fall of Poland.

While her German diction is a model of clarity, the dark vowels and flavoursome consonants of Polish seem to inspire Mields to an extra expressive intensity: the *bel canto* patriotic lament 'Melodya' (Chopin's last and arguably most moving song) is more fervent than in its German incarnation, while the love song-waltz 'The Wish' becomes more teasingly seductive. Playing an overtone-rich 1848 Pleyel, Nelson Goerner, too, brings an added freedom and subtlety of nuance to the Polish originals. I just wish I wasn't left with a nagging sense of having been short-changed.

Richard Wigmore

Fauré

DVD

Requiem, Op 48^a. Pavane^b. Elégie^c. Super flumina Babylonis^b. Cantique de Jean Racine^b ^aChen Reiss sop ^aMatthias Goerne bar ^cEric Picard vc

^{ab}Choir of the Orchestre de Paris; Orchestre de Paris / Paavo Järvi

Video director Isabelle Soulard

EuroArts (F) 205 8878; (F) 205 8874 (Blu-ray available from late April 2012) (92' • NTSC • 16:9 • DTS 5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s) Includes interview with Paavo Järvi



Järvi with Fauré evergreens and rarities on DVD from Paris

This is an appealing concert that cleverly mixes the familiar with the unfamiliar and includes a well-known piece in an unfamiliar guise. The *Pavane* was composed in 1886 and dedicated to the Vicomtesse Greffulhe. After its premiere the vicomtesse suggested that voices should be added: Fauré duly added a four-part chorus to pastoral verses by Comte Robert de Montesquiou. Beating two-in-a-bar, Paavo Järvi keeps the music flowing along nicely.

The choral arrangement of the *Pavane* was performed at the Société Nationale in Paris, which had seen the premiere of the *Elégie* in December 1883. This was in its original version for cello and piano, possibly intended as the slow movement of a sonata. Fauré's orchestration was performed in 1902. A long, *legato* melody for the soloist is contrasted with a livelier, syncopated tune introduced by the clarinet. Eric Picard plays with fervour but the camera does him no favours by focusing on his anguished facial expressions.

Next comes the rarity. Fauré composed Super flumina Babylonis at the age of 18 when he was studying with Saint-Saëns. The semiquaver phrase on the strings that pervades the opening is perhaps derived from the chorus of Egyptians in Rossini's Moïse et Pharaon: ironic, if so, as here it's the Israelites who are lamenting. Solos for soprano, alto and tenor are followed by an animated quartet at 'Si non proposuero Jerusalem', punctuated by horn calls. The chorus re-enters strongly at 'Memor esto, Domine', after which a unison passage leads to a dying-away for the orchestra. A fine piece, stirringly performed. The Cantique de Jean Racine is too much like an anticipation of Franck's sentimental 'Panis angelicus' for my taste but Järvi doesn't let his forces overdose on the sugar.

Järvi brings a similar no-nonsense approach to the full-orchestral version of the Requiem, so the string tune in the 'Agnus Dei' doesn't sound like proto-Elgar. The violas and cellos are wonderfully expressive throughout: just listen to the hairpin dynamics, intensified when the phrase is repeated, as they accompany Matthias Goerne's noble baritone at 'Quam olim Abrahae'. There are some intonation problems in the 'Agnus' and 'In paradisum' but otherwise the 90-strong choir sings well. Isabelle Soulard's video direction is pleasingly unobtrusive. Richard Lawrence

Gieilo

Dark Night of the Soul^a. Evening Prayer^b. The Ground^a. Northern Lights. Phoenix. Prelude. Serenity^c. The Spheres. Tota pulchra es. Ubi caritas. Unicornis captivatur

Phoenix Chorale / Charles Bruffy

with ^bTed Belledin *tsax* ^cEmmanuel Lopez *vc*^{ab}Ola Gjello *pf* ^aHarrington Quartet

Chandos (F) ______ CHSA5100 (60' • DDD/DSD • T/t)



Phoenix Chorale sing Norwayborn American resident Gjeilo

Rarely have I spent so disagreeable an hour as in listening to this excellently sung and produced new disc. Unless it was in listening through a second time. It is not that I have anything per se against devotional music – which, by the way, all the pieces are, despite the twee, New Agey feel of many of the titles – but most of these pieces go nowhere, doing precious little doing so.

Ola Gjeilo (b1978) strikes me as a popular (populist, even) composer not unlike Rutter, Whitacre, Cecilia McDowell and Karl Jenkins. Their music has undoubted appeal and each work here shows a flair for choral balance that sounds grateful to sing. Taken together, however, I found the cumulative effect enervating. And am I wrong to find something disingenuous in Gieilo's rebranding some of Christianity's finest sacred texts in such anodyne guises? Thus 'O magnum mysterium' becomes Serenity, 'Kyrie eleison' The Spheres; 'Exsultate, jubilate' (the only item with any real sense of joy or energy, with an engaging quasi-medieval tone, and the shortest) Prelude and so on. Phoenix - a setting of the 'Agnus Dei' - Gjeilo claims is 'symphonic in nature...in which the text is very much the servant of the music, not the other way round...more like film music set to pictures'. Oh dear.

Bruffy, the Phoenix Chorale and associated performers do not put a foot wrong. Chandos's SACD sound is marvellous. But if you want really inspirational unaccompanied choral music from the North that is modern in spirit but appealing to the audience, look no further than Holmboe's *Liber canticorum*. Now I would really like to hear the Phoenix Chorale sing that! **Guy Rickards**

Handel

'Complete Cantatas, Vol 3'
Aminta e Fillide, 'Arresta il passo', HWV83
Klaartje van Veldhoven, Stefanie True sops
Contrasto Armonico / Marco Vitale hpd
Brilliant Classics ® 94230 (48' • DDD • T/t)

Handel

'Complete Cantatas, Vol 4' Clori, mia bella Clori, HWV92. Sans y penser, HWV155. Clori, vezzosa Clori, HWV95. Pensieri notturni di Filli, 'Nel dolce dell'oblio), HWV134.

Lungi n'andò Fileno, HWV128
Klaartje van Veldhoven, Stefanie True sops
Contrasto Armonico / Marco Vitale /npd
Brilliant Classics

94257 (50' • DDD • T/t)





Two volumes of the Dutch Handel cantata series with new catalogue additions Aminta e Fillide was probably composed for Handel's principal Roman patron, the Marquis Ruspoli (whose descendent Princess Claudia Ruspoli is official patron of this recording). The first version might have been produced in December 1706 but a comparison of the autograph and early manuscript sources reveals that, for a later performance (perhaps in September 1708), Handel inserted two big arias towards the end of the cantata. Previous recordings by Denys Darlow and La Risonanza both incorporated Handel's extra arias but Marco Vitale bucks the trend and reverts to the shorter first version. His conscientious booklet-note presents a sensible argument for his decision: a more natural flow to the conclusion of the poetry without two elaborate arias holding up the final duet, an avoidance of awkward modulations between old recitatives and new arias, and consistency of instrumental scoring for three violins and basso continuo (the extra music requires additional violins and viola). Contrasto Armonico's experiment produces an enjoyable alternative. String ritornellos are paced and played tenderly, and the relaxed exchange of recitatives serves the elegant Arcadian poetry. Fillide's 'Fiamma bella' is sung enchantingly by Stefanie True (worthy winner of the 2011 London Handel Singing Competition). Klaartje van Veldhoven's voice has a few shades more bite, which is ideal for the clarity of contrast between the two characters; she also sings Aminta's 'Se vago rio' with captivating deftness (the pizzicato strings lacking violone conjure an atmosphere of gentle weightlessness).

On Vol 4 the identical team of players and singers present five shorter cantatas that might have been written for Ruspoli, including the unique French cantata Sans y penser (copied for Ruspoli in September 1707), in which the shepherdess Silvie (True) and the shepherd Tirsis (Veldhoven) take turns to share wry observations on the fickleness and tortures of love. The music is a rare instance of Handel composing Francophile vocal music; Vitale's harpsichord-playing, continuo cellist Marta Semkiw and the two singers combine intuitively and stylishly to produce an inch-perfect performance. Neglected continuo cantatas Clori, vezzosa Clori and Lungi n'andò Fileno receive their first-ever



Recording Bo Hansson at Douai Abbey, Berkshire, in the presence of the composer (centre)

recordings; in the latter, True poignantly expresses how an abandoned lover wishes for death to bring an end to their fierce pains ('Dunque se il tanto piangere'). In *Clori, mia bella Clori*, violins converse beautifully with True ('Mie pupille se tranquille'). Contrasto Armonico's slow-burning series continues to furnish Handelian food for thought.

David Vickers

Aminta e Fillide – selected comparison: London Handel Orch, Darlow (7/85^R) (HYPE) CDH55077 La Risonanza, Bonizzoni (12/08) (GLOS) GCD921524

Hansson

Som när handen (As when day dawns).
Salve regina. The I heard the singing. For as the rain^a. The place amongst the trees. Missa brevis^a.
Lighten mine eyes. Endless border
Choir of Royal Holloway / Rupert Gough with

aWilliam Baldry org
Hyperion ® CDA67881 (68' • DDD • T/t)



Choral works by the Swedish guitarist-turned-composer

Bo Hansson (*b*1950) is a jazz musician who turned to classical music in mid-career, and whose choral music has met with considerable recognition. How his association with the mixed Choir of Royal Holloway began isn't recorded, though the composer finds in them sympathetic advocates, and his music shows off their strengths to great advantage.

The pieces on this recording are *a cappella* apart from a couple where an organ is included. Hansson's approach to choral writing, though varied as to the number of voices employed, is limited none the less by a relatively narrow expressive range, reverential and churchy in a post-tonal way, albeit inflected by the addition of the organ (particularly in the *Missa brevis*), whose material is itself rather connoted. The reliance on ostinato from work to work, though, means that the impression of sameness is not merely expressive but technical.

On the positive side, Hansson is sensitive to the possibilities of incorporating plainchant (as in the *Salve regina*), and some of the transitory effects that he conjures up (such as the syllabic patter around 5'00" of *The place among the trees*, perhaps the most inventive piece here) evoke genuine interest, though one might wish that they were pursued more intensively or in greater number, because the Choir of Royal Holloway make the most of such challenges. It is their confident and committed performance that warrants a recommendation from the objective listener; those to whom an appreciation of this idiom comes naturally will find much to enjoy.

Fabrice Fitch

Janáček

Six Moravian Choruses (transc from Dvořák's Moravian Duets). The Wild Duck. The Wolf's Trail. Elegy on the Death of My Daughter Olga. Nursery Rhymes. Our Evenings. Ave Maria. Our Father (Otčenáš)

Thomas Walker ten Philip Mayers pf

Cappella Amsterdam / Daniel Reuss

Harmonia Mundi (F) HMC90 2097 (72' • DDD • T/t)



Choral songs and the Dvořák arrangements from Holland

This is an attractive selection of Janáček's vocal pieces, and a wide-ranging one. The Dvořák arrangements were mostly made in 1877, the year that the two composers met, and are cleverly re-set by adding tenor and bass parts from the accompaniment to the original soprano and alto. In his monumental biography of Janáček (Faber: 2006-07), John Tyrrell quotes Dvořák as admiring the younger man as 'someone who thinks with his own head', and his originality breaks out the whole time in the touching, amusing, sometimes quirky little choruses collected as *Říkadla* or 'Nursery Rhymes' (this is the fuller, revised second grouping of 18 songs).

The longer pieces include some fine music. If the *Elegy on the Death of My Daughter Olga*, however affecting, is not among the greatest, perhaps this is because (as Tyrrell perceptively suggests) Janáček was still too close to the agonising event when he wrote it. But it is well and movingly sung here. So is the touching The Wild Duck and, a larger concept, the dramatic ballad The Wolf's Trail, very skilfully worked for female voices and piano, in which the old captain follows the trail to his house, where he finds his young wife in the arms of their employer. Janáček was not unacquainted with the pangs of jealousy, as his operas often show. The Ave Maria sets not the liturgical prayer to Mary but a verse taken from Byron's Don Juan, quite succinctly. Otčenáš, on the other hand, is a setting of the Lord's Prayer treating the various supplications with wide-ranging imagery and a vivid approach to the text, even seeming to include a hidden reference to the national anthem at a time when Janáček was wanting to assert his Moravian affiliations. But why was it associated with the prayer 'Forgive us our trespasses'?

Daniel Reuss has a good feeling for the cut and colour of Janáček's phrases and the chorus are admirable in making all his originalities fall naturally into place, though it would be better if the recording had helped their articulation of the words to be clearer. For those to whom Czech is a strange language, that might not seem to matter, but its rhythms and its inflections were so close to Janáček's invention that something is lost. John Warrack

Mozart

Masses^a - No 6, K192; No 16, 'Coronation', K317. Ave verum corpus, K618^b. Exsultate, jubilate, K165^c. Epistle Sonatas^d - K67; K224 Susan Gritton sop Frances Bourne mez Sam Furness ten George Humphreys bar Choir of St John's College, Cambridge; St John's Sinfonia / Andrew Nethsingha with John Challenger org

Chandos Chaconne (F) CHANO786 (71' • DDD • T/t)



Mozart Masses and miniatures from the chapel of St John's

This new recording of Mozart's ever-popular Coronation Mass appears shortly after one from Tewkesbury Abbey (Delphian, 1/12). Both recordings feature boys on the top choral line and a period-instrument band but St John's features all adult soloists rather than the boy treble of Tewkesbury's offering. It's good to hear the less often performed F major Missa brevis of 1774, perhaps the finest of these small-scale Salzburg Masses (with its intriguing Credo using as a main motif the four-note theme of the finale of the Jupiter Symphony of 14 years later). Out go the festive oboes, horns, trumpets and drums of the later Mass (composed for Easter celebrations), leaving the 'Salzburg church trio' of a pair of violins with basso continuo underpinning the voices. The St John's boys are in fine voice, surer and more secure than Tewkesbury. St John's Sinfonia, led by the college's musician-in-residence Margaret Faultless, offer transparent accompaniment, with Mozart's ingenious horn parts particularly audible.

It's good, too, to hear a pair of epistle sonatas, works composed to cover the 'scene changes' of the liturgy. Of the two, the later sonata (in F) particularly demonstrates Mozart's ear for adventurous harmony (even in so compact a design) and for sonority, with its bell-like cascading violin figures. Of the makeweights, the ubiquitous Ave verum corpus is taken, as so often, at half-speed, and Susan Gritton has the last word, rather than the St John's choir, with the showcase motet Exsultate, jubilate. For the Coronation Mass, the new disc trumps Tewkesbury; while if you wish to explore Mozart's earlier Masses and don't have sets by, for example, Peter Neumann or Nikolaus Harnoncourt, this new F major is an ideal place to start. David Threasher

Nørholm

Stilleliv (Still Life), Op 45. Blomster fra den danske poesis flora (Flowers from the Flora of Danish Poetry), Op 36 (two versions). Tavole per Orfeo, Op 42

Else Torp sop Per Pålsson gtr Mathias Friis-Hansen perc Dacapo (® 8 226068 (56' • DDD)



Early music specialist Torp in 1960s Nørholm

Ib Nørholm (*b*1931) is a prominent Danish composer whose commitment to polystylistics

came early and wholeheartedly. He never disavowed the roots of his earliest work in post-Nielsenesque tonality, allowing it to resurface explicitly even after his espousal of avant-garde idioms in the 1960s. The works on this recording date mostly from that decade, which encompasses the 'New Simplicity' of the Flowers from the Flora of Danish Poetry (1966, originally for piano and voice) and the Tavole per Orfeo (1967-69), whose central movement embodies music theatre in recitar parlando style. Between these extremes is the broadly atonal song cycle Stilleliv ('Still Life') of 1968, in which a strophic quality is carried over from the more straightforwardly tonal works. Though these latter are not uniformly successful - the consecutive octaves in 'Juniakvarel' ('June water-colour') are really cloying - their inclusion demonstrates the sheer range of styles with which Nørholm sought to engage. Ultimately, that range is such that in a comparatively short recital, the relationship between them isn't always obvious - a slightly unsettling experience.

That said, the composer could hardly wish for more elegant interpreters. Inevitably, Else Torp takes centre stage. In the more modernist pieces her straight tone allows for admirable clarity, while the tonal ones admit of judicious vibrato. Only in the music theatre piece could one have done with more abandon, with Euridice's venom having still more bite. Ably seconded by her accompanists (with guitarist Per Pålsson enjoying his solo movements in the *Orpheus* cycle), she delivers polished, assured performances. Fabrice Fitch

Schubert

'Willkommen und Abschied'

Heidenröslein, D257. Schlummerlied, D527. Wiegenlied, D867. Geheimes, D719. Ganymed, D544. Auf der Bruck, D853. Der Fischer, D225. Dass sie hier gewesen, D775. Bei dir allein, D866. Der Schiffer, D536. Willkommen und Abschied, D767. Der Wanderer, D493. Im Walde, D834. Wandrers Nachtlied, D224. Der Einsame, D800. Der Winterabend, D938. Herbst, D945. Romanze aus Rosamunde. D797. Nachtstück. D672

Werner Güra ten Christoph Berner fp Harmonia Mundi © HMC90 2112 (67' • DDD • T/t)



Güra and Berner on a homegrown Schubert life journey

Rather than group their Schubert recital around poets, Werner Güra and Christoph Berner here chart a Schubertian 'Seven ages of Man': from infancy (in the lullabies 'Schlummerlied' and 'Wiegenlied'), via adolescence, love fulfilled, disillusion and romantic alienation, to old age, culminating in the valedictory nocturne 'Nachtstück'. It's a thoughtfully planned, unclichéd programme, leavening favourites with the occasional rarity

like the turbulent Schulze setting 'Im Walde'. Güra is a singer who often communicates more vividly on disc than in the flesh, where a certain stiffness can inhibit enjoyment. His dulcet timbre and eager verbal response are heard to particular advantage in, say, 'Heidenröslein' (the hint of ruefulness in the final verse beautifully judged), 'Der Fischer' and a flowing, unsentimental 'Der Winterabend', its tricky little cadential flourishes gracefully negotiated.

Singer and pianist battle grimly with the hostile elements in 'Auf der Bruck', Güra's desperate bravado counterpointed by the clear, percussive bass of Berner's 1872 Rönisch fortepiano. The muscle within his elegant lyric tenor is likewise flexed in an excited, abandoned 'Willkommen und Abschied', and 'Im Walde', where he and Berner catch both the driving anguish and the moments of lyrical poignancy. Ardour gets the better of him in 'Geheimes', surely the fastest, least secretive performance on disc. 'Schlummerlied', too, has an inappropriate undercurrent of restlessness, with too many jabbing first-beat emphases. But Güra is never dull. 'Der Wanderer' is intensely 'lived', the opening bleak and desiccated; he exults blithely in 'Bei dir allein' and penetrates the mysterious inwardness of 'Dass sie hier gewesen', whose nebulous harmonies sound that much stranger on the fortepiano. One of the most eloquent performances of all is the last song, 'Nachtstück', where Güra movingly shrouds his tone in the outer sections and spins an ideally sweet and supple line in the central cantilena. Here, too, singer and pianist show an acute sensitivity to harmonic colour that characterises this whole rewarding recital.

Richard Wigmore

Schumann

Sechs Lieder, Op 33 - No 1, Der träumende See; No 2, Die Minnesänger; No 3, Die Lotosblume. Fünf Romanzen und Balladen, Op 67. Romanzen, Op 69 - No 1, Tamburinschlägerin; No 3, Klosterfräulein. Spanisches Liederspiel, Op 74 - No 2, Intermezzo; No 4, In der Nacht; No 5, Es ist verraten; No 9, Ich bin geliebt. Vier doppelchörige Gesänge, Op 141 Flemish Radio Choir / Bo Holten with Inge Spinette pf Etcetera © KTC4033 (57' • DDD)



Composer Holten conducts neglected choral Schumann

Before the First World War rendered all things German anathema, Schumann's *a cappella* works, like Mendelssohn's and Brahms's, were choral society staples. Today they are probably the most neglected area of his entire output. Not all these settings are free from Lederhosen heartiness – the side of Schumann that wears least well – or Biedermeier blandness. But the range and depth of the best of them, above all the magnificent works for double choir, Op 141, may come as a revelation. Highlights

elsewhere include a mixed-choir version of 'Heidenröslein' – without Schubert's piquancy but full of sentimental charm – the tender, touching setting of Burns's 'John Anderson' and the chromatically lush 'Die Lotosblume' for men's chorus, just as sensitive in its response to Heine's verses as the famous solo song in *Myrthen*.

Although Schumann envisaged more ample forces, the 24-strong Flemish Radio Choir under the sympathetic direction of Bo Holten sings with fresh, keenly focused tone, pure intonation (crucial in Schumann's many chromatic thickets) and a wide spectrum of dynamics and colour. 'Zuversicht' has a rapt, echt-Schumannesque Innigkeit, while the transcendent final climax of 'An die Sterne' and the heaven-storming cries of 'Gott ist der Orient, Gott ist der Occident' in 'Talismane' have a thrilling impact. In the pianoaccompanied items from the Spanisches Liederspiel, the light, bright solo voices enjoy themselves in the Teutonised Spanish pastiche of 'Es ist verraten' and 'Ich bin geliebt'. The two duets are less successful: the reverie of 'Intermezzo' should surely have more underlying urgency, as the words demand, and the poignant nocturne 'In der Nacht' ideally needs a soprano and tenor with more sensuous warmth in the tone. These minor provisos apart, this beautifully recorded recital should open many ears to the beauties of Schumann's choral works, above all the works for double choir, with their majestic sonorities and often visionary harmonies. Richard Wigmore

Schütz

Musicalische Exequien, SWV279-81. Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben, SWV464. Grimmige Gruft, SWV52. Gutes und Barmherzigkeit, SWV95. Ich hab mein Sach Gott heimgestellt, SWV94. Das ist je gewisslich wahr, SWV277. O meine Seel, warum bist du betrübet, SWV419

Dorothee Mields, Anja Zügner sops Alexander

Dorothee Mields, Anja Zugner sops Alexander
Schneider counterten Jan Kobow, Tobias Mäthger tens
Matthias Lutze bass-bar Harry van der Kamp bass
Matthias Müller vion Ludger Rémy org Dresden
Chamber Choir / Hans-Christoph Rademann
Carus © CARUS83 238 (68' • DDD/DSD)



Musicalische Exequien for the lastest in Carus's Schütz cycle

Last year I reviewed this ensemble in Schütz's Op 1, his only book of madrigals (8/11). My reservations stemmed there from the choice of a choir in what would doubtless have been quintessential solo repertoire. Here are no such qualms, for in his *Musicalische Exequien* Schütz intended a division between the vocal ensemble and the soloists drawn from it. In fact, this much-recorded work receives as fine an interpretation as I can recall, thanks in no small measure to a cast of distinguished and

sympathetic singers. But the continuo section, the recorded ambience and an unhurried sense of pacing also play their part. It's impossible not to remark on Schütz's marvellous rhetorical efficiency, his unerring feeling for sonic architecture; but by eschewing drama in favour of interiority, Rademann's ensemble also achieves something rather special.

Because of their length (around half an hour), the Exequien have usually been coupled with a selection of Schütz's other occasional funeral works. This one is especially fine: Dorothee Mields turns in an affecting performance of the solo song Grimmige Gruft, while the sacred concerto Ich hab mein Sach Gott heimgestellt prefigures the first part of the Exequien in its text and structure. The choral forces adopted for the chorale-like O meine Seel, warum bist du betrübet seems very apposite, though one can't help feeling that solo voices would have served better in Schütz's memorial for his colleague Schein, Das ist je gewisslich wahr. A very fine continuation to an impressive series. Fabrice Fitch

R Strauss

Acht Lieder aus Letzte Blätter, Op 10 - No 1, Zueignung; No 3, Die Nacht; No 4, Die Georgine; No 8, Allerseelen. Ständchen, Op 17 No 2. Sechs Lieder aus Lotusblättern, Op 19 - No 3, Schön sind, doch kalt die Himmelssterne; No 4, Wie sollten wir geheim sie halten; No 6, Mein Herz ist stumm. Schlichte Weisen, Op 21 - No 1, All mein' Gedanken; No 2, Du meines Herzens Krönelein; No 3, Ach Lieb, ich muss nun scheiden. Vier Lieder, Op 27 - No 2, Cäcilie; No 4, Morgen!. Ich trage meine Minne, Op 32 No 1. Das Rosenband, Op 36 No 1. Sechs Lieder, Op 37 - No 3, Meinem Kinde; No 4, Mein Auge. Befreit, Op 39 No 4. Muttertändelei, Op 43 No 2. Drei Lieder der Ophelia, Op 67. Malven, Op posth

Soile Isokoski sop Marita Viitasalo pf Ondine © ODE1187-2 (64' • DDD • T/t)



Strauss Lieder from the respected Finnish soprano

Soile Isokoski sings Richard Strauss almost as a singer of the composer's own time. Recordings of his songs from the 1930s and '40s show that not everyone had Lotte Lehmann's pathos but projected the songs in ways that reported the words and their contents, as opposed to living them. Both approaches can be done well or badly, and Isokoski is, even in lesser moments, consistently thoughtful and well-studied. One is particularly grateful that, in the operatic *Ophelia* songs, she conveys only the inner distress of the Shakespearean heroine and leaves the madness to the piano-writing.

The problem with Isokoski is that her vocalising has ungracious edges, no doubt exaggerated by the microphone. This is not Kiri Te Kanawa's Strauss with a polished *legato*

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line. As always with Isokoski, one either finds a certain humanity in her less-than-rounded tones – or not. Such positive qualities burn from within during songs such as 'Zueignung' and 'Morgen!' (blessed by particularly beautiful pianism by Marita Viitasalo) and especially in the lesser-known 'Befreit', a performance whose subtle empathy is a summation of what has always made Isokoski such an endearing figure on the operatic landscape. More imaginatively, in the final-line twist she gives to 'Die Georgine', in which the rhapsodic poetry acknowledges painful sides of romantic rapture, she projects quiet bafflement, as if to ask why the pain is worth the pleasure.

The repertoire's uneven quality, though, isn't in her favour. The middling inspiration of 'Du meines Herzens Krönelein' doesn't give much to work with. A similar challenge in 'Das Rosenband' renders a performance that's well sung but shapeless. The fragile charms of 'Muttertändelei' and 'All mein' Gedanken' are obscured by Isokoski's audible labour in the busier vocal runs and the slowish tempo she requires to fit them in. Such is the dilemma of all-Strauss discs in an age of 60 minutes' plus playing time: once a singer subtracts the songs that aren't vocally inappropriate, the rest is bound to contain some substandard poetry and music, with maybe one Straussian flourish.

Vasks

David Patrick Stearns



The Tomtit's Message. Silent Songs. Our Mother's Names. The Sad Mother. Summer. Plainscapes^a. Small, Warm Holiday. Birth^b

Latvian Radio Choir / Sigvards Kļava with ^aSandis Šteinbergs vn ^aGuna Āboltiņa vc ^bJānis Kokins perc Ondine (Ē) ODE1194-2 (71' • DDD • T/t)



Environmentalist Vasks with choral pictures of Latvia

For their second disc of Vasks's choral music on the Finnish Ondine label, the compellingly brilliant Latvian Radio Choir concentrate on his secular *a cappella* repertory. The texts are mostly by Latvian poets, the exception being *The Sad Mother* by the Chilean Gabriela Mistral (although it is sung in a Latvian translation). Their messages encompass the spiritual dimensions of nature, hope and love, sleep and yearning for the sun.

The music recorded here spans 30 years, 1978-2008, a period which included the tail end of brutal Soviet occupation to the rebirth of an independent nation, which had survived against the odds. The earliest piece, *Summer*, for female voices only, soars ecstatically, with the poise of Stanford's *Blue Bird*. The miniature *Small, Warm Holiday* is equally sublime and accomplished.

Intensity and integrity are the hallmarks of Vasks's style. He writes in a harmonically rich,

reassuringly diatonic idiom, clothed in beautifully balanced and largely homophonic textures. He ranges from the introspectively evocative *Silent Songs* (Poulenc meeting Górecki) to the more assertive and adventurous *Our Mother's Names*. Extended vocal techniques are even more to the fore in *The Tomtit's Message*, with its ethereal clusters, *glissandos*, grunts, groans and whistles.

However, the most compelling piece is the album's title-track, *Plainscapes*, an extended vocalise with string duo accompaniment, commissioned by Gidon Kremer in 2002. Although almost too harrowingly beautiful to listen to, I do recommend this magical piece, which together with its companions is performed with consummate perfection by this outstanding body of singers. Malcolm Riley

Whitacre

'Water Night'

Alleluia^a. Equus^b. Oculi omnium^a. The River Cam^c. Her sacred spirit soars^a. Water Night^b. Goodnight Moon^d. When David heard^a. Sleep My Child^a dHila Plitmann sop ^cJulian Lloyd Webber vc/ a^aEric Whitacre Singers; bcd London Symphony Orchestra / Eric Whitacre

Decca © 279 6323 (75' • DDD)



Larger-scale creations for Whitacre's second Decca disc

Whitacre's debut album 'Light and Gold' met with near-universal approval when it was released in 2010. Even critics who had previously viewed the composer's unashamedly direct tonal idiom with scepticism had to concede that what Whitacre did. he did well.

At times on this second release for Decca, Whitacre 'does Whitacre' very well indeed. The positives are to be found in works which build upon the firm foundations laid down in his trademark choral style, as heard in the rich yet resourceful Alleluia setting which opens 'Water Night'. Inspired by his short residency at Cambridge University last year, plainchantstyle patterns weave in and around a sustained central note before broadening out on to a more expansive and expressive choral canvas. Likewise Oculi omnium, whose consonantsounding clusters create wonderfully rippling effects. Such stacked harmonies are heard on earlier works on this disc, such as the ambitious 17-minute When David heard.

All of which makes the inclusion of the loud and bombastic orchestral tone-poem *Equus* puzzling. Described by the composer as 'dynamic minimalism', it is a work which is high on thrills but low on substance. Sanity is restored in the restless tranquillity of *The River Cam* for solo cello and string orchestra. Inspired once more by his time at Cambridge and played with a combination of power and restraint by Julian Lloyd Webber,

the work's lustrous pastel colours evoke Vaughan Williams. Whitacre's instrumental compositions are altogether more effective when replicating his choral style, as demonstrated most clearly in the string-orchestra arrangement of his well-known setting of Octavio Paz's Water Night. This is a shrewd piece of recycling but other works in the back catalogue are actually probably best left alone. Pwyll ap Siôn

'Being Beauteous'

Britten Les illuminations, Op 18^a **Castiglioni**Terzina^b **Henze** Being Beauteous^b **Schoenberg**Herzgewächse, Op 20^b **Szymanowski** Słopiewnie
(The Cherry Trees), Op 42*b*^b

Anu Komsi son

^aOstrobothnian Chamber Orchestra / Juha Kangas; ^bUusinta Chamber Ensemble / Sakari Oramo Alba (F) ABCD331 (58' • DDD/DSD • T/t)



Komsi sings the 20th century with help from husband Oramo

Anybody who has heard Anu Komsi in Saariaho's remarkable *Leino Songs*, or other works written for her, will want to discover this latest disc from the Finnish soprano. Described as having a 'dynamic coloratura voice', Komsi is no ordinary, girl-next-door soprano. Her singing comes on a generous scale, with a wide range and bags of personality – easily enough to encompass every aspect of this multifaceted 20th-century programme.

In her hands, the songs of Britten's Les illuminations hold the key to a truly 'savage parade'. I am not sure Britten would have entirely approved – there are some jarring, vibrato-less sounds just under the note and Komsi's ideas can be a touch garish (try the ugly scoop at 'Il parlait aux amis de révélation' in 'Royauté') - but this is singing unafraid of exploring Rimbaud's dark side. 'Phrase' has rarely sounded so other-worldly or 'Parade' so unbuttoned, all wholeheartedly supported by the Ostrobothnian orchestra under Juha Kangas. From there it is only a short step to Henze's Being Beauteous, a setting of one of the same Rimbaud poems for perilously high soprano, four cellos and harp, sung here with fearless bravura.

The other three items take her on to new challenges. Schoenberg's *Herzgewächse*, with its Queen-of-the-Night high F hanging magically in the air, is always a jaw-dropping party piece and does not disappoint here. After that, her heartfelt singing in Castiglioni's *Terzina* brings five minutes of rapt stillness. Then Szymanowski's alluring cycle *Slopiewnie* ('The Cherry Trees') ends the disc in a mood of exotic beauty torn by a few moments of wild abandon. In these smaller pieces Oramo and the Uusinta Chamber Ensemble are exemplary colleagues, well recorded. It is hard to imagine

a programme that is more imaginative or singing more compelling. Richard Fairman

'Il canto della Sirena'

Anonymous Tarantella del Gargano, Lamento di Marinetta. Prologo: Micco con Calascione é Cuosmo. Tarantella Coppola Sinfonia a 4 Coya L'amante impazzito, Op 1 Durante Concerto per cembalo e archi Faggioli Stò paglietta presentuoso. Marte Ammore guerra e pace Fago Toccata Greco Toccata e fuga. Partite sull'Aria di Mantova Manelli La Luciata a 4 Marchitelli Sonata a 3 Netti Sinfonia a 4 Provenzale Squarciato appena havea. Care selve, amati orrori. Compatitemi amanti. La mia speme è vanità. Come io viva Dio lo sà. All'impero d'Amore. Gionto il fatal di. Sdegnosetta e che vuoi tu?. Voi care ombre notturne. Me senta 'na cosa. Mo vedimmo. Serva antica Rubino Oh cielo oh ammore Sabino Non cchiu Ciccillo mio. A Scarlatti Ammore, brutto figlio de pottana Tricarico Sdegno,

Pino De Vittorio ten I Turchini / Antonio Florio Glossa (F) (3) GCD922603 (3h 32' • DDD • T/t) Recorded 1991-96

campion audace Vinci Vide vi' lo giesommino



Florio and I Turchini with the racy side of the Italian Baroque

'The Song of the Siren' runs the rubric, though the voices in this three-disc set of Neapolitan Baroque songs and cantatas are more likely to be bitchy, sardonic or plain raunchy. Even the normally ultra-refined Alessandro Scarlatti has fun setting a salty text in Neapolitan dialect, slyly pointing the humour with the odd juicy dissonance. Tenor Pino De Vittorio has two of the discs virtually to himself and his raw, pungent timbre, easy agility and wry way with the vernacular texts make him the perfect advocate of these post-watershed tales of lust, infidelity and erotic frenzy. Where needed, too, he can tone down the folk-style abrasiveness to reveal a light, ductile 'Baroque' tenor. His declamation and comic timing are an object lesson, not least in a sequence of increasingly delirious mini-cantatas by Simone Coya chronicling the travails of 'the crazed lover'.

On the other disc, bawdy comedy and zesty Neapolitan dance rhythms, given an exuberant kick by I Turchini's colourful continuo battery, are leavened by several pieces in more decorous or reflective pastoral vein: say, the cantata Care selve by Francesco Provenzale, whose eloquent plaint, sung with delicate feeling by Roberta Invernizzi, is one of the highlights of these discs. I also enjoyed the pure, androgynoussounding alto of Daniela Del Monaco as the bereft lover in another touching Provenzale cantata, La mia speme è vanità.

Florio and his players are always vivid animators, while harpsichordist Enrico Baiano makes his mark in a couple of agreeable toccatas and a miniature harpsichord concerto by Durante. Pleasure in this unbridled



'Bags of personality': Anu Komsi with Kangas's Ostrobothnian CO at the Snellman Hall, Kokkola, Finland

Neapolitan exuberance is enhanced by the extensive essay by Dinko Fabris and full texts with aptly racy translations. Richard Wigmore

'Cesena'

(3)

'Songs for Popes, Princes and Mercenaries (c1400)' Anonymous Pictagore per dogmata/O terra sancta/ Rosa vernans. Inter densas/Imbribuis irriguis. Adieu vous di Ciconia Le ray au soleyl Jean Hanelle Hodie puer nascitur/Homo mortalis firmiter Johannes Galiot En attendant d'amer Matheus de Sancto Johanne Science n'a nul annemi Philippus de Caserta Espoir dont tu m'a fayt partir. Par les bons Gedeon et Sanson Senleches Fuions de ci Solage Corps feminin. Fumeux fume par fumee Traditional Čuješ li me Majko Graindelavoix / Björn Schmelzer

> New Age hits the Ars Subtilior in turn-of-15th-century songs

Glossa (F) GCDP32106 (72' • DDD)

Right from the start this disc sets out to shake preconceptions. The sleeve information is folded within a kind of dust-jacket - the last place you would expect to find it. It folds out into an uncomfortable document in several colours. None of the texts is translated. The first piece, the motet Pictagore per dogmata, taken at breakneck speed, has the tenor doubled an octave lower, with bizarre consequences for the texture. The next, Solage's Corps feminin, has a whole chunk sung with just the discantus and contratenor, with results that go against everything known about the musical grammar of the time (only one of its three stanzas is sung). But the most famous oddity of this repertory, Solage's creepily chromatic Fumeux fume, is made to sound even odder by the use of two groups an octave apart

to sing the different strophes, all joining together for the last.

Much is sung with a dreamy quietness (no instruments but often multiple voices on a single line), with ornaments and slides, with relatively little diction. Most of the pieces are cut up into bits in ways that make them hard to understand unless you have the modern edition in front of you. Still, everything is done with considerable precision and there are some superb voices, carefully controlled. Equally, it is clear that a powerful mind has gone to work on trying to see and hear this music in a new way.

The title 'Cesena' marks a terrible slaughter on that city by papal troops in 1377. The recording is the soundtrack of an event at the Avignon Festival last summer, in which dancers also participated. This is either a truly innovative approach to the music or a load of pretentious ideas that rather lost their way. I think, probably, a bit of both.

David Fallows

'Los pájaros perdidos'

'The South American Project'

Ambros/Rosales Zamba para no morir Cabral ¡Ay! este azul Díaz Caballo viejo Luna/Ramírez Alfonsina y el mar Nella Castro/Herrera Zamba del Chaguanco Otárola Ojito de agua Piazzolla Los pájaros perdidos Ramones La embarazada del viento Reches/Gleijer Como un pájaro libre Rivera La cocoroba Soler Fandango Traditional Alma llanera. Duerme negrito. Isla Sacá. Montilla. Pájarillo verde. Pájaro campana. Polo margariteño Trejo/Quintana/Plaza El curruchá Velázquez Besame mucho Walsh Como la cigarra Raquel Andueza sop Philippe Jaroussky counterten Lucilla Galeazzi, Luciana Mancini, Vincenzo Capezzuto sgrs L'Arpeggiata / Christina Pluhar Virgin Classics (F) 678516-2 (76' • DDD)



On session: L'Arpeggiata ready themselves for the Virgin Classics microphones



Pluhar experiments with period instruments for Latin standards

'The Lost Birds' is how this title translates into English; couple that with its subtitle, 'The South American Project', and you would be forgiven for thinking that this was another expedition into rediscovered Baroque repertoire. In fact, most of the tracks here are folksongs or 20th-century Latin standards. The reasoning is both simple and ingenious: that the plucked instruments played today in South America are more closely related to those of the 16th and 17th centuries, when the Spanish and Portuguese first introduced them to the continent, than to their modern-day European descendants, and therefore represent a kind of 'living Baroque'. In an imaginative reversal, Christina Pluhar has applied her 'bigband' continuo line-up of harps, psalteries, theorbos and guitars to songs by the likes of Astor Piazzolla, Aríel Ramírez and Consuelo Velázquez, adding in the odd charango or arpa llanera and occasional cornett riff. There is also a colourful and swinging arrangement of Soler's harpsichord Fandango.

So much for the explanation. Pluhar's booklet-note is pretty thorough; but really the important thing is to enjoy the music for its immediacy and honesty. And in this it is deeply pleasing. The songs are a typically Latin American mix of haunting melody and

rich imagery but the whole project gains strength and variety from its quality of performances. Pluhar's instrumentalists are top-class and each of the five singers has something special to offer, from Philippe Jaroussky's sweetly plaintive countertenor to the extraordinarily touching and feminine tones of Vincenzo Capezzuto, and from Luciana Mancini's dark, youthful passion to the hard-won emotional authority of folk singer Lucilla Galeazzi. 'Early music' this isn't but it is beautiful music-making. Lindsay Kemp

'A Song of Farewell'

'Music of Mourning & Consolation' Dove Into thy hands Elgar They are at rest Gibbons Drop, drop, slow tears Howells Requiem MacMillan A Child's Prayer Morley Funeral Sentences Parry Songs of Farewell - No 6, Lord, let me know mine end Sheppard In manus tuas I Walton A Litany R White Christe qui lux es et dies Gabrieli Consort / Paul McCreesh Signum (F) SIGCD281 (78' • DDD)



McCreesh's singers in British music of mourning and loss

Any disc subtitled 'Music of Mourning & Consolation' is not going to be a bundle of laughs. But Paul McCreesh has devised such a satisfying programme of mostly short a cappella pieces that the effect is the reverse of depressing. Gibbons would not have approved

of the English Hymnal's truncation of his joyful 'song' to fit different (albeit contemporary) words; but he might still have been moved by the slow, prayerful performance given here. It's followed by Walton's setting of the same verses, with its haunting two-note phrases and a final cadence almost worthy of Howells.

And it's Howells who makes the most substantial contribution to the disc. The Requiem was written for the choir of King's College, Cambridge, in 1932 but not released for performance till 1980. Much of the second movement, a setting of Psalm 23, is a choral recitative. After a solo passage for three voices, sweetly sung by Charlotte Mobbs, Kim Porter and Richard Butler, the choir enters pianissimo. McCreesh handles the subsequent crescendo at 'I will fear no evil' quite magically. Psalm 121, similar in conception, is followed by the second 'Requiem aeternam', sung with intensity.

McCreesh finds equal poignancy in MacMillan's A Child's Prayer. If the last of Parry's Songs of Farewell doesn't quite match Richard Marlow's performance (Conifer, 9/87 - nla), that is partly due to the over-reverberant acoustic of the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral. An excellent disc, all the same. Richard Lawrence

'Tune thy Musicke to thy Hart'





Amner O ye little flocka. A stranger here Browne Jesu, mercy, how may this be? Byrd Why do I use my paper, ink and pen?a Campion Never

weather-beaten sail **Croce** From profound centre of my heart **Dowland** I shame at my unworthiness **Gibbons** See, see, the Word is incarnate^a **Parsons** In nomines a 4^a - No 1; No 2 **Ramsey** How are the mighty fall'in **Tallis** Purge me, O Lord **Taverner** Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas - In nomine^a **Tomkins** O praise the Lord. When David heard **Stile Antico**; ^aFretwork

Harmonia Mundi (Ē) → HMU80 7554 (65' • DDD/DSD • T/t)



Stile Antico and Fretwork with Tudor and Jacobean devotions

We are enjoined by this fine recital to bring nuance to distinctions between sacred and secular, and what we sometimes sloppily assume to be public and private modes of musical expression in 16th-century England. The very concept of 'private musical devotion' we might melodramatically associate with priest-holes, and Byrd's Mass for Four Voices in a wardrobe. Some wardrobe it would have to be to accommodate the 12 exultant voices of Tomkins's O praise the Lord, which is one instance of several on the album where the conceit is stretched thin: just because the piece survives in a private (as opposed to ecclesiastical) collection doesn't mean that is its natural home. What's more important is that Stile Antico's sleek tuning and supple attention to words, and the studio recording, intimate but not claustrophobic, do bring a carefully plotted span (over 120 years) of sacred styles into our listening rooms with rare success.

The 12 singers don't go all out for the fullblooded staging of madrigalian word-painting that we'd hear from The Cardinall's Musick, and they use less vibrato than some longestablished groups, but they no less effectively build the structures of verse anthems by Gibbons and Amner. The latter's A stranger here is a remarkable discovery for me, with its culminating, dissonant Amen. Amid such rich Jacobean harmonies, the restrained precision of Browne's carol *Jesu*, *mercy* effects a welcome shock to the listening ear. Melancholy introspection is banished at length by Gibbons's embrace of the entire Incarnation, sung not with the haloed eloquence of the Clerkes of Oxenford but rather the keen interplay of Red Byrd, only without the artfully local pronunciation. To have Fretwork on hand is a further boon. Peter Quantrill

'A Year at Winchester'

Bruckner Ave Maria Byrd Senex puerum portabat Dove The Three Kings Gowers Viri Galilaei^a Elgar The Spirit of the Lord is upon me Purcell Hear my prayer, O Lord, Z15 Rutter Winchester Te Deum Sheppard Libera nos, salva nos Stanford Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem Sweeney Litany. Quem quaeritis Tavener God is with us (Christmas Proclamation) C Wood Hail, gladdening light

Choir of Winchester Cathedral / Andrew Lumsden with Simon Bell org ^aRichard McVeigh synth Regent (© REGCD372 (65' • DDD • T/t)

'A Year at York'

Bairstow The Lamentation (as sung in York Minster)
Blow Salvator mundi Bullock Give us the wings of
faith A Carter The Magi Clucas A Prayer of Alcuin
of York Comeau Audi coelum Dering Factum est
silentium Haynes O sacrum convivium F Jackson
Alleluia, laudate pueri Dominum G Jackson
Justorum animae Joubert There is no rose
P Moore Caedmon of Whitby's First Hymn Naylor
Vix dicentis: clama P Philips Ascendit Deus
R Shephard Nunc dimittis (in memoriam Lionel
Dakers) Skempton Ave Virgo sanctissima Stainer
I saw the Lord Stanford Magnificat in G major Tallis
If ye love me Taverner O Wilhelme pastor bone
Choir of York Minster / Robert Sharpe

with **David Pipe** org

Regent **©** REGCD368 (73'• DDD • T/t)

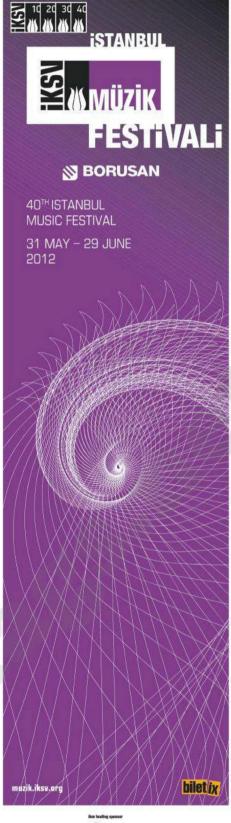




A year in the life of two high-profile cathedral music departments
These are the first two CDs in Regent's
'A Year at...' series. Each disc takes a liturgical and musical journey through the Christian year from Advent to Pentecost, plus festivals and saints' days. The choice of repertoire is wide-ranging and it's gratifying to hear several works from the past 25 years. Particularly noteworthy and enjoyable are the works by Andrew Carter, Paul Comeau and Philip Moore from York (receiving their premiere recordings), and Jonathan Dove, Patrick Gowers and John Rutter from Winchester.

Both of the two cathedral choirs include boy and girl choristers and are virtually identical in size and number, with 17-18 boys, 20 girls and 12-14 adults. Also matched is the sound of the boys and girls, so it's appropriate to regard them as different singers from the same single group of choristers. Meanwhile, the men have a rich tone, almost operatic at times. This can occasionally overshadow York's choristers. whose sound has an attractive fragility. At Winchester, their strong sustained tone results in a more equal partnership with the lower voices. In terms of balance, blend and ensemble, I feel that Winchester have the edge over York; but both choirs are clearly flourishing under the imaginative direction of Andrew Lumsden and Robert Sharpe.

Excellent support is given by organists Simon Bell and David Pipe, although the latter only contributes to 25 per cent of the CD – a wise decision given the distant sound of the York organ. The Winchester organ is the finer instrument and deserves its higher profile. An auspicious start to what should prove a major collection of choral recordings. Christopher Nickol





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Opera



Richard Fairman reviews Mozart's Ottoman comedy from Spain:

'This is to be a serious psychological drama and the pace is punishingly slow, every drooping line of dialogue strung out' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 111



Mike Ashman reviews an archive Ariadne from Austria:

'Janowitz is not in as free and unpressured a vocal state as she was for Kempe in 1968 but she sounds committed' REVIEW ON PAGE 113

Glass



(79' • DDD • S/T)

Welsh company in Glass's Kafka opera on his own label

Glass has never been afraid to tackle difficult and uneasy subjects in his operas. *Waiting for the Barbarians, Appomattox* and *Kepler* are all set against the troubled backdrop of war but none is more harrowing than *In the Penal Colony*. Adapted from a short story by Franz Kafka, Glass's opera was first performed in Seattle in 2000 but received a new lease of life when it was toured around the UK by Music Theatre Wales in 2010. The same cast and musicians are heard on this recording, conducted by the ever-present Michael Rafferty.

The story revolves around the officer's execution of a prisoner and the manner in which it is to be carried out. The execution is witnessed by a visitor who becomes increasingly fascinated by (and involved in) the horrific spectacle that unfolds, despite trying to retain his distance from proceedings. Eventually the tables are turned on the officer's inhumane actions. Glass's obsessively repeating patterns, pulsating bass notes and uneasy chromatic shifts lend themselves effectively to this sense of entrapment, claustrophobia and calculated cruelty. But what makes In the Penal Colony both a disturbing and, at times, a poignant work is the way in which Glass's musical language responds to subtle nuances in the tone and expression of the text while simultaneously driving the action forward. The opera's minimal forces (two singers supported by string quintet, with the sound of the torture machine sometimes coming into play), plus Music Theatre Wales's Brechtian staging, also adds to the work's disturbing undertow. Michael Bennett is especially impressive in the role of the visitor - the innocent bystander-turnedaccomplice. Playing is not without its blemishes (the untidy conclusion to scene 9, for example) but in an opera which deals in stark detail with

some of humanity's darkest blemishes, this becomes strangely appropriate. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

Heggie

Dead Man Walking	
Joyce DiDonato mez Sister Helen Prejean	
Philip Cutlip barJoseph De Rocher	
Measha Brueggergosman sopSister Rose	
Michael Sumuel barMotorcycle Cop	
Frederica von Stade mez Mrs Patrick De Rocher	
John Packard barOwen Hart	
Cheryl Parrish sopKitty Hart	
Susanne Mentzer mezJade Boucher	
Jon Kolbet tenHoward Boucher	
Chorus and Orchestra of Houston Grand Opera /	
Patrick Summers	

Virgin Classics (F) (2) 602463-2 (141' • DDD)



Second recording for Heggie's death row opera

The next logical step for Jake Heggie's hit opera *Dead Man Walking* would seem to be a DVD. In its early productions the opera was a true stage animal, distinguished more for its dramatisation than the actual music that tells its gritty story of a nun counselling a convicted killer on death row in Louisiana's Angola State Prison. Some 12 years later, the opera has a second sound-only recording with a largely different cast, but is dramatically transformed orchestrally by conductor Patrick Summers (who also led the 2000 recording, made shortly after the San Francisco premiere). If the opera seemed good before, it's rather better now.

Based on a memoir by the real-life Sister Helen Prejean that was made into a hit film of the same title, Dead Man Walking initially felt like a return to mid-20th-century Gian Carlo Menotti with 21st-century theatrical steroids. Heggie drew from a wide range of familiar operatic tactics (as in Werther, innocent children's songs in Act 1 return amid tragedy in the final scene) but with a conviction that suggests that if he hadn't invented them (and his relatively conservative harmonic language), he could have. The different elements of opera - from mere walking-around music to heartfelt soliloquies - are all well in hand, though the intensity of the Act 2 revelations is, no doubt, what brought the opera to wide popularity. In

the new recording, the score feels less like a 'numbers' opera and more all of a piece, more consistently solid than before, thanks to better pacing. The opera now evokes its own distinctive musical world, even if it pales in comparison with Heggie's recent (and masterfully atmospheric) *Moby-Dick*.

Many elements of the new recording are simply different. Some characters have heavier Louisiana accents than before, though Frederica von Stade, who plays the killer's mother and is the main holdover from the original recording, has less accent - and is just as touching in one of her best but least characteristic roles. The central role of Sister Helen has a considerable change of temperament. In the first recording, Susan Graham goes deep into the character's psyche with precisely wrought vocal colour, in what stands among her best recorded performances. Any questions about the nature of her faith are answered by the quiet, inward confidence when she sings 'Hail Mary' during the nun's dark, exhausted hour in Act 2. In the same moment, Joyce DiDonato, the new Sister Helen, is more an inflection-based singer who comes to the vocal lines almost as heightened speech, and handles that moment with more worldly desperation - with equal but different dramatic effect. Graham's characterisation was that of someone in over her head. The more confrontational, can-do DiDonato leaves no question that she'll get a confession out of the killer. DiDonato also makes the nun and the murderer soul mates. each loving the other in the spirit of operatic tenor and soprano. Interesting!

As the killer, Philip Cutlip is prickly and vocally imposing in his early scenes. But later on he becomes rhetorically understated in ways that make his ultimate confession even more devastating than that of the excellent, more dramatically aggressive John Packard in the original. Cutlip's apology to the family of the deceased even comes out in a scared-little-boy voice. It's here that you realise why the luxury casting in the secondary roles isn't as thrilling on disc as it might have been on stage in Houston. The duet between DiDonato and Measha Brueggergosman (as her confidante Sister Rose) becomes too operatic for the





Michael Bennett, Omar Ebrahim and musicians from Music Theatre Wales in Glass's In the Penal Colony

opera's good. Same thing in the ensemble scene with the family of the deceased, featuring Susanne Mentzer: it's operatic mush in ways that obscure what makes this piece distinctively American – a word-based dramaturgy that draws from American folksong, blues and Broadway, blended so instinctually and effortlessly that one barely notices until its balance is upset. David Patrick Stearns

Selected comparison:

San Francisco Op, Summers (ERAT) 8573 86238-2

Massenet

Don Quichotte	
Ferruccio Furlanetto bass	Don Quichotte
Anna Kiknadze mez	Dulcinée
Andrei Serov bass-bar	Sancho Pança
Eleonora Vindau sop	Pedro
Yulia Matochkina mez	Garcias
Carlos d'Onofrio ten	Rodriguez
Dmitry Koleushko ten	Juan
Didier Jouanny bar	Ténébrun
Soloists' Ensemble of the Mariinsky	Academy of
Young Singers; Mariinsky Orchestra	/ Valery Gergiev
Mariinsky 🖲 ② 🎂 MARO523 (112' •	DDD/DSD • S/T/t)



Massenet's Monte Carlo opera from Gergiev and the Mariinsky

Don Quichotte was the fourth opera commissioned from Massenet by Raoul Gunsbourg, director of the Monte Carlo Opéra. The title-role was composed for Chaliapin, who took part in the premiere in February 1910; in Paris the following December the Russian was replaced by the French bass Vanni-Marcoux, whom Massenet preferred. The Dulcinée on both occasions was Lucy Arbell, the composer's – shall we say – muse.

A comédie héroïque in five short acts, Don Quichotte has something in common with Verdi's Falstaff: both operas treat, more or less comically, of an old knight going a-wooing; each appeared towards the end of its composer's creative life and neither reveals its qualities at first sight. That is not to say that those qualities are comparable: Falstaff is pretty well perfect, whereas Don Quichotte contains passages both spare and arid. But there are many gems, and Massenet is as good as any of his compatriots at writing Spanish music: Carmen herself would not be ashamed to sing Dulcinée's 'Quand la femme a vingt ans'.

The two recordings that readers might have come across feature Nicolai Ghiaurov and José van Dam respectively. I haven't heard the latter version, but to judge from his farewell to the

Brussels stage in 2010, I'd personally question if van Dam had the bass tones and physical stature required. Ghiaurov was a true bass and he is partnered by two splendid French singers, Gabriel Bacquier and Régine Crespin. The Quichotte in this nearly all-Russian recording from the Mariinsky Concert Hall is an Italian, Ferruccio Furlanetto. He too is a real bass and his dark, round tone is perfect for the role. He can't resist uttering his trademark sob now and then but much can be forgiven for his beautiful legato as Quichotte prays in front of the bandits. When the knight is rejected by Dulcinée, Furlanetto's combination of sadness and dignity is most affecting; and so is the death scene with Andrei Serov's distraught Sancho. Anna Kiknadze finds heart as well as frivolity in Dulcinée's music. Gergiev and his chorus and orchestra are on fine form and the recorded sound, in the experienced hands of James Mallinson, is excellent. Richard Lawrence

. Pasha Selim Christoph Quest spkr Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona / Ivor Bolton

Stage director Christof Loy

Video director Pietro d'Agostino

C Major Entertainment (F) 22 709108; (F) 2 709204 (188' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD MA 5.0, DTS 5.1 & PCM stereo • O • s)

Recorded live, July 2010



🗽 Loy's Abduction on DVD from Barcelona with Bolton in the pit

It could be years before we see a light-hearted production of Die Entführung aus dem Serail again. While relations between the Christian and Muslim worlds may be no laughing matter these days, does Mozart's comic Singspiel really have to be played as a po-faced treatise on love and the religious divide? Christof Loy's highly praised production from Barcelona squeezes every last drop of comedy from the piece. This is to be a serious psychological drama and the pace is punishingly slow, every drooping line of dialogue strung out with long, meaningful silences, just as in the Herrmanns' similarly gloomy production conducted by Harnoncourt.

The setting here is the present day and Loy typically favours a bare stage to focus attention on the issues. Osmin sits at an office desk, a handkerchief over his head in the midday heat. A lone table, set for dinner and adorned by a single large candelabra, awaits Konstanze and Selim in Act 2. A mix of Western and Turkish costumes offers some colour at the start, but by the end everybody is dressed in identikit white shirts and black trousers/skirts. Has Western civilisation won? Or is the moral simply that we are all the same underneath?

The musical performance deserves better than this. Diana Damrau scored a notable success as Konstanze and her accomplished singing of a difficult role (she sings the extended version of 'Martern aller Arten') is the main highlight of the performance. Christoph Strehl's Belmonte is stylish and sensitive, even in the often-cut 'Wenn der Freude Tränen fliessen', but the voice lacks expressive 'juice' at the top. Olga Peretyatko's Blonde, played as a pert secretary who never smiles, and Norbert Ernst's earnest Pedrillo deliver what the production demands, as do Franz-Josef Selig's Osmin, happily not the usual Turkish caricature, and Christoph Strehl's grave Selim. Ivor Bolton gets lively playing at uncontroversial speeds down in the pit but it is the hang-dog spoken dialogue that sets the tone. Those who lauded Loy's production will be pleased to see it preserved on DVD. Personally, I find it depressing to watch the wit and life being drained so completely from Mozart's opera. Richard Fairman

Selected comparison.

Harnoncourt (DG) 073 4540GH2

Mozart Die Zauberflöte





.....Three Ladies



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Maria Radner contr..... Barbara Massaro, Elena Caccamo,

Eleanor de Prez sops Roman Sadnik tenPriest; First Armed ManSecond Armed Man Simon Lim bass..... Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan / Roland Böer

Stage director William Kentridge

Video director Patrizia Carmine

Opus Arte (F) 2 OA1066D: (F) 2 OABD7099D (150) • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS 5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s) Recorded live March 2011

Extra features include interviews with William Kentridge and Roland Böer, and Cast Gallery



Kentridge's La Monnaie Magic Flute filmed at La Scala

William Kentridge's production of Die Zauberflöte was first seen at La Monnaie in Brussels in 2005. Since then it has been staged in a number of theatres - including one in Kentridge's native South Africa before reaching La Scala last year. It is very much 'producer's opera' and it will annoy some people. I found it fascinating, despite having reservations on both fronts, musical and philosophical.

Although Kentridge is dismissive of Freemasonry, he does see the opera - how could he not? - as a conflict between light and darkness. But in an interview he describes his production as 'a kind of a distant polemic against Sarastro and against the notion of the pure light of reason', adding that 'reason comes not from pure clarity but from somehow muddling in the space between darkness and light'. He takes as his metaphor the cinema, where 'blinding light means there is no more film in the projector'; and there is a box camera on the stage, through which the characters peer from time to time.

The metaphor becomes reality in Kentridge's brilliant use of video projections, including the serpent pursuing Tamino, the three temples, and various geometrical symbols. These are animated drawings; but during Sarastro's 'O Isis und Osiris' there is old film of what looks like a couple of Boers with rifles. What's all that about? Well, during 'In diesen heil'gen Hallen' those huntsmen are seen shooting a rhinoceros, as Pamina looks on in horror; and when in the Act 1 Finale Tamino played his flute, it was a cartoon rhino

that was shown cavorting. Innocent nature versus wicked mankind, I suppose, and a heavyhanded example of Kentridge's anti-Sarastro polemic. For the Queen of the Night he recreates the well-known starry sky that Karl Friedrich Schinkel designed for Berlin in 1815.

The video projections are in black and white but there's plenty of colour in the costumes: a safari suit for Tamino, a brown frock coat for Papageno, Pamina in a red dress, Sarastro and his entourage - especially the Speaker - in natty floral waistcoats. Monostatos is a late-19th-century Ottoman, complete with fez and waxed moustache.

I almost forgot the singers. Excellent Queen and Pamina; the men less so, except for Papageno. Lively musical direction, incorporating René Jacobs's superfluous keyboard interjections. Don't miss this visually enchanting and thought-provoking treat.

Richard Lawrence

Nebra

Iphigenia en Tracia	
Marta Almajano sop	Iphigenia
María Aspada sop	Orestes
Raquel Andueza sop	Dircea; Mochila
Soledad Cardoso sop	Polidoro
Marta Infante mez	Cofieta

Carlos Javier Méndez ten

El Concierto Español / Emilio Moreno

Glossa (F) (2) GCD920311 (97' • DDD)

Recorded live in Leónard/Soria, Spain, December 2010



Nebra's 1747 zarzuela recorded live in Spain

And what, you may well ask, is Iphigenia doing in Thrace? Hoping to intercept Orpheus, before he is torn to pieces by the Bacchantes infuriated by his never-ending lament for Eurydice? The prosaic answer is that Nebra's librettist didn't know his Thrace from his Tauris: we are indeed on the Black Sea, and the plot is the same as Gluck's Iphigénie en Tauride sort of. Iphigenia and Orestes are present and correct, but so is their sister Electra, who has neither danced herself to death (Strauss) nor suffered unrequited love on Crete (Mozart). Moreover, she is married to Orestes' bosom friend, Pylades. Then there's Priam's son Polydorus, who loves Iphigenia; and Dircea, his intended - wandering in from another legend altogether - who fancies Orestes.

José de Nebra (1702-68) was a church musician, employed by the Spanish court as composer, organist and choirmaster, and a prolific composer of works for the stage. Iphigenia en Tracia, performed in Madrid in 1747, is a zarzuela, an opera of which the greater part consists of spoken dialogue. The dialogue is omitted on this live recording, which makes it hard to keep abreast of the action: Electra and Pylades don't have singing



Serious affair: Mozart's Die Entführung aus dem Serail in Barcelona

roles, for example, and the relevance – if any – of the comic turns is a mystery.

The music is very agreeable, and Italianate in style: *secco* recitatives (with one accompanied recitative at the end) and *da capo* arias, including a simile aria – our old friend the shipwreck – for Polydorus. The scoring is string-based, but not uniformly so: Polydorus's aria has prominent parts for the horns and Iphigenia's aria in Act 1 includes some charming interplay between flutes and strings. But Nebra doesn't half go on. He will repeat the A section of a *da capo* number before proceeding, and then of course round it comes again. The catchy sequence of suspensions in the Act 1 quartet palls on the umpteenth repetition and Cofieta's aria lasts for a good 10 minutes.

There are no weak links among the allfemale cast and the orchestra is excellent. A byway rather than a highway, enjoyable and interesting but not, perhaps, essential.

Richard Lawrence

R Strauss

Ariadne auf Naxos	
Gundula Janowitz sop	Ariadne
Agnes Baltsa mez	Composer
Edita Gruberová sop	Zerbinetta
James King ten	Bacchus

Walter Berry barMusic-Master Barry McDaniel bar......Harlequin Kurt Equiluz ten Scaramuccio Manfred Jungwirth bass.....Truffaldino Gerhard Unger ten Brighella Hilda Groote SOD..... Axelle Gall contr..... .Dryad Sona Ghazarian sop..... .Echo Erich Kunz spkr..... .. Major-Domo Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera / Karl Böhm Orfeo d'Or M 2 C817 112I (122' • DDD) Recorded live, November 1976



Böhm and Janowitz with a 1976 Ariadne in Vienna

A Karl Böhm *Ariadne* is not news. There are four predecessor competitors currently still available (a 1969 DG LP set from Munich with much the same cast – Hillebrecht, Thomas, Grist – as a 1965 Salzburg DVD has not, as far as I know, reached CD yet). They range from historic broadcast mono (now Myto, once DG, 1944) to reasonably modern on-DVD stereo (DG, 1978). The first of these, despite the occasion – a Nazi grandee-led celebration of Strauss's 80th birthday in wartime Vienna – is one of the great performances of any opera, led by Max

Lorenz's unstinting Bacchus, Maria Reining's stylish Ariadne and Alda Noni's Zerbinetta.

Böhm's way of handling the score is already established here. He lets the rather modern-sounding components of Strauss's around-40 chamber orchestra sound; you can always, for example, hear the harmonium, the piano and the percussionists clearly, whereas Karajan and Levine (and even Masur and Kempe a little) almost try aurally to pretend they're not there. Even at the climax of the opera, with Bacchus and Ariadne going vocally full tilt, Strauss never sought to make this opera's sonorities resemble those of a big late-Romantic orchestra. Böhm respects this in 1976 as much as in 1944.

The cast combines the new with the mature. Agnes Baltsa is a pert, ultra-stylish Composer, her passion for her music (and a little for Zerbinetta) evident but well reined in. Janowitz is not in as free and unpressured a vocal state as she was for Kempe (EMI) in 1968 but certainly sounds committed. Gruberová (replacing Böhm's once-favoured Reri Grist) does not tease her text out in the aria as some (Sylvia Geszty for Kempe), is not always as sexy as some (Geszty again) but she is both genuinely virtuoso and funny – though Orfeo has opted to keep far too much untracked applause at the

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Cast-members look on as Angela Denoke's Salome dances in Baden-Baden

end of 'Grossmächtige Prinzessin'. Trusting in his fine male cast, Böhm (in what one may call 'late style') allows the Harlequin accompaniments to become very bar-room – apt, and he's always there to pick them up after showtime. Finally, there's James King's Bacchus, in good form and seeming to have gone even further with his personal investigation of how best to vocalise this not always grateful role.

This old newcomer rates highly. There can't be one 'best' Ariadne in such a wide market as today. I'd want the 1944 Böhm, the 1935 Clemens Krauss (but it's only the opera), the 1968 Kempe (wonderful conducting of the Dresdeners in his first-ever performance of the score), the Sinopoli (DG, 2000 – good allround cast and interesting 'modern' reading from the conductor, like Böhm but a stage further) – and this new release, too, in good-ish, most 'live' sound.

Mike Ashman

Selected comparisons:
Kempe, 1968 (11/92) (EMI) 764159-2
Sinopoli, 2000 (A/01) (DG) 471 323-2GH2
Kraus, 1935 (PRIS) PACO021
Böbm, 1944 (MYTO) MCD00163

R Strauss	Blue on One CHIEF
Salome	
Angela Denoke sop	Salome
Alan Held bass-bar	Jokanaan
Kim Begley ten	Herod
Doris Soffel mez	Herodias

Marcel Reijans *ten*...........Narraboth Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin / Stefan Soltesz

Stage director Nikolaus Lehnhoff
Video director Thomas Grimm

ArtHaus Musik © № 101 593; © № 108 037
(112' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD MA 5.0,
DD 5.0 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live at the Festspielhaus, Baden-Baden, 2011



Denoke and Held star in Lehnhoff's 2011 Salome

We await a gripping modern *Salome* on DVD': that was Mike Ashman's verdict on the 2007 La Scala production (TDK, 4/09). Whether or not you think this latest offering fills the gap is likely to depend on two main factors – setting and singing.

Nikolaus Lehnhoff's productions are often in a style best characterised as surreal naturalism. The story is not presented as ancient history: Herod and Herodias appear to arrive by automobile, Narraboth shoots rather than stabs himself. An atmosphere of Berlusconian sleaze is reinforced by Salome's dance – more tease than strip – and her dowdy costume adds to the ironic distancing of the character as Angela Denoke portrays her; more mature than juvenile, more coldly calculating than feverishly impulsive.

The singers move confidently around a serviceable set that shows Herod's palace in the guise of a grounded cruise liner, listing and

breaking up. There are no soldiers with shields to crush Salome at the end: instead a single executioner advances on her with a knife. None of this is wildly at odds with the aggressively decadent spirit of the drama. I happen to prefer a more abstract kind of expressionism than Lehnhoff and his design team provide but there's no denying the conviction of the performance, and the filming is suitably bold in its use of close-up, even though the frequent cut-aways to silent-film-style reaction shots are a mixed blessing. The focus on stage and singers is unrelieved: no sign of the orchestra, the conductor or even an audience, and no curtain calls at the end.

Nevertheless, the unseen conductor Stefan Soltesz makes a powerful impression and the torrid score breathes but never drags. Denoke has the measure of the taxing title-role: assuming what we have is a single, unedited performance, she does particularly well to save an extra degree of vocal heft for the final scene. Those hair-raising highest notes might not have the startling radiance of a studio-recorded Birgit Nilsson but Denoke's voice packs in the necessary aura of manic exaltation. She is well supported by Kim Begley and Doris Soffel, who do much more than merely screech their way through their parts, and by Alan Held as a John the Baptist as obsessively driven in his own way as Salome is in hers. Not quite the ideal modern Salome, perhaps, but it will do for the time being.

Arnold Whittall

Verdi

Simon Boccanegra Plácido Domingo barSimon Boccanegra Anja Harteros sop Fabio Sartori tenGabriele Ferruccio Furlanetto bass...... Fiesco Massimo Cavaletti bar..... PaoloPietro Ernesto Panariello bar..... Antonello Ceron tenCaptain Alisa Zinovjeva sop....

Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan / **Daniel Barenboim**

Stage director Federico Tiezzi Video director Patrizia Carmine

ArtHaus Musik (F) 22 101 595; (F) 2 108 039 (149' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD MA 5.1, DD 5.1 & PCM stereo • O • s)

Recorded live 2010



Domingo's third DVD Boccanegra, now at La Scala under Barenboim

Whatever one thinks of Plácido Domingo's assumption of the baritone title-role of Simon Boccanegra, he has decidedly raised the opera's profile on DVD. Though he only took up the role in 2009, this La Scala set is his third, preceded by the Royal Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. From evidence I've seen on YouTube, a Madrid production seems to have been shot but isn't commercially available. The tenor voice in the central baritone role (with some adjustments) gives a false picture of the opera's complexion. But, as one blogger put it, 'I don't give a fach'.

The opera gives Domingo a role that allows him to use all he knows from his years of singing Otello and The Queen of Spades in his age-appropriate portrait of Boccanegra, who becomes the doge amid deep-seated rivalries in 14th-century Genoa and is ultimately reunited with his long-lost daughter - using music that Verdi is said to have written for his aborted attempt to bring King Lear to the opera stage. Choosing between the three DVDs, if one must, is maddening.

La Scala put Domingo in extremely distinguished company - soprano Anja Harteros as Amelia, durable Ferruccio Furlanetto as Fiesco and, in the pit, Daniel Barenboim, who has limited history with Verdi but delivers the kind of eloquently moulded, dramatically succinct phrases heard in his Wagner performances of late. The La Scala production is the most handsome of the three. That doesn't mean it's the best.

Verdi doesn't always 'clean up' well. Herbert von Karajan's late-period Verdi outings, for example, often feel too airbrushed to be interesting. In this case, the airbrushing comes from the La Scala production, which is earnestly poetic but has little sense of unity from one scene to the next. The prologue

conveys a harbour scene with picturesque silhouettes. Later court scenes are colourcoordinated and as symmetrical as a Wieland Wagner Lohengrin production. Other scenes have a mass of planks suggesting meticulously arranged earthquake wreckage.

In many ways, the production's limitations are embodied in the Act 1 revelation scene. when Simon discovers that Amelia isn't his potential bride but his daughter. Uprooted trees hang over the top of the stage and slowly make their way down. Lighting is pale blue with lots of shadows. This is one of Domingo's most theatrically nuanced scenes in the Covent Garden video. But at La Scala, he's positioned so far from Harteros's Amelia (gorgeously sung with her deep, mezzo-ish tone) that close-ups have to be one singer or the other. Domingo is on the short end of that, seen mostly in midrange shots, subverting any chance of his projecting an emotional arc in a scene that most certainly has one. And when seen at closer range, his acting is more generalised than in Covent Garden.

The video direction is fancy bordering on unsympathetic. It's one thing to have shots zeroing in on a set design detail in rhythm to the music but quite another when, in the final act as plot details are being tied up, that every shot fades into a blackout - albeit quickly but suggesting that the scene is ending rather than continuing. Several such shots are used in a single minute near the end in a lure-in-thenewcomers approach that maintains visual variety at a narrative-taxing cost. The Act 2 poisoning scene is so ineffectively projected you might not know what's going on. Fight scenes are so stylised that nobody gets their hair mussed.

In contrast, the Covent Garden Boccanegra is the durable though relatively plain Elijah Moshinsky production with theatrically radiant performances by Domingo and Marina Poplavskaya, who sing in peak form and act the opera with great emotional immediacy. They live their roles. The Met's intricate, storybook production has Domingo amid a stentorian cast with spinto (rather than lyric) soprano Adrianne Pieczonka and, more daringly, veteran Wagnerite James Morris as Fiesco. Though vocally wayward, he gives Domingo much to play off. Antonio Pappano (London) and much-missed James Levine (New York) are idiomatic Verdians of similar temperament. Yet at La Scala, Barenboim's status as a Verdian outsider - and the fresh insights that come with that - is a genuine drawing card. Were this a CD rather than a DVD, one might be able to appreciate him even more.

David Patrick Stearns

Selected comparisons:

Domingo, Royal Op, Pappano (2/11) (EMI) 917825-9 Domingo, Met Op, Levine (9/11) (SONY) 88697 80664-9

An inside view of who's before the mics and what they're recording

Lortie accompanies Dumay

French conductor and violinist Augustin Dumay has initiated a new relationship with Onyx Classics in his latter guise - recording the Strauss Sonata and Schumann's Second Sonata in Brussels recently with pianist Louis Lortie for release in November. An orchestral project - featuring the Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra under Dumay as both director and violinist - will follow hot on its heels.

Mastering a Master

A mammoth and memorable concert at the Wigmore Hall in February was caught by the microphones of the hall's own label and is currently in mastering. Ian Bostridge (below) was joined by two orchestras (Aurora Orchestra and The English Concert), two conductors (Nicholas Collon and Laurence Cummings) and two additional soloists (mezzo Angelika Kirchschlager and violinist Nadja Zweiner) for music by Britten Corelli Handel Satie and Scarlatti. Look out for the release under the banner of 'The Bostridge Project' in November.



Melbourne Mazurkas

Producer Phil Rowlands has been busy recording the Orchestra Victoria Ensemble in Melbourne, Australia. Rowlands' YouTube channel contains a charming taste of what we can expect on Melba Recordings with a neatlycut video of Marigold's Mazurka by Dennis Vaughan. Search YouTube for 'Phil Rowlands Dot Com' to sample some rather fine playing and an inside view of the recording process at South Melbourne Town Hall.

...and back in the studio

For Volume Two of the London Mozart Players Complete HMV stereo recordings on First Hand Records, highly respected Abbey Road sound engineer Christopher Parker returned to the Harry Blech recordings he'd made there 50 years earlier. He acted as audio consultant to the set's remastering engineer lan Jones it was the first time Parker had visited Abbey Road since retiring in 1987 after 36 years working on many iconic EMI recordings.

Books



Jeremy Nicholas reads great pianists in conversation:

In the end it's the meat that matters and Benser's book has enough to make it of lasting, if limited, value'



Philip Clark on a new study of Bernstein's musical theatre works:

'A rather desperate need to place Bernstein within a wider cultural context leads to dead ends when hard evidence fails to materialise'

At the Piano: Interviews with 21st-Century Pianists

By Caroline Benser

Scarecrow Press, HB, 165pp, £31.95 ISBN 978-0-8108-8172-3



So who are the '21st-Century Pianists' in question? Step forward Leif Ove Andsnes,

Jonathan Biss, Simone Dinnerstein, Marc-André Hamelin, Stephen Hough, Steven Osborne, Yevgeny Sudbin and Yuja Wang. Not a bad line-up.

There have been many 'Pianists in Conversation' books over the years, from James Francis Cooke's Great Pianists on Piano-Playing (1913) to David Dubal's The World of the Concert Pianist (1985) with its substantial contributions from 35 leading artists. Caroline Benser's is a more modest volume with just eight pianists. It is similar to the scope and Q&A format of Great Pianists in their Own Words (1979) by the reputedly great piano teacher Adele Marcus (1906-95, who coincidentally makes two unflattering appearances in the present book; she sounds quite ghastly). The difference is that most of Benser's interviews were conducted not face-to-face but on the telephone. This has its advantages in that it reads like a conversation between two people without the distractions of asides from the interlocutor. Some readers might be glad of the absence of the kind of interpolated observations that normally accompany similar interviews in magazines and newspapers: 'Miss X, in a fetching turquoise kimono, laughed nervously' or 'Mr Y looked tired and bristled noticeably at the inference'.

The disadvantage of Benser's approach is that one interviewee ends up sounding very much like another, the equivalent of a CD of piano-roll recordings by different pianists all played by the same pianolist. Without meeting your victims in the flesh and conveying the 'local colour' of an encounter it is hard to discern personal mannerisms, speech patterns and the other individual characteristics of each artist. Some interviews,

too, were conducted a while ago (Leif Ove Andsnes, for instance, in 2005) and have passages that are already dated.

The excellent three- to four-page biographies that precede each interview are bang up to date, current enough to mention the premiere of Stephen Hough's *Broken Branches* and the death of pianist Nicolai Petrov, both in 2011, but inevitably produce many anomalies, not least in the altered circumstances of private lives. Benser's biography of Hamelin refers to his 12 *Etudes in all the Minor Keys* (2010); in the 2006 interview we read 'CB: You've had some things published. M-AH: Very few, but yes...I really haven't written a lot yet'.

In the end it's the meat that matters and Benser's book has enough to make it of lasting, if limited, value to piano students, pianophiles and the peers of those included in the book. Why do they do it, asks Benser? What first inspired them? With whom did they study? Which pianos do they prefer (Sudbin is one of several interviewees who are less than enthusiastic about Faziolis)? What are their thoughts on audiences, travel, learning by heart, Beethoven, new music, certain venues, favourite recordings (their own and other peoples'), pre-concert rituals the staple questions of every interviewer's arsenal. There are some lovely little nuggets along the way: Sudbin reveals some psychological tricks he received from (fellow interviewee) Hough about practising certain jumps in Liszt and how to bring out hidden voices; Osborne on improvisation and stage fright (or, in his case, lack of it); Hamelin on Sorabji, and that Nokia ringtone...

Each biography/interview section concludes with a good selective discography and is prefaced with a murky black-and-white photograph of the pianist in question, the lack of definition due mainly to the quality of the paper on which the book is printed. The book's index is not as reliable as it might be and there are several discographical errors (eg Alkan: Selections [sic] from Concerto for Solo Piano). Benser makes some

contentious statements in her introduction. Is the piano really 'an awkward instrument'? Is York Bowen really as obscure as Georgy (Benser calls him Gregoire) Catoire? Is it really true that 'without doubt the most active and creative performers on today's stages are those who become the strongest advocates of music being written today'? Let's return to *At the Piano* in 25 years and see if that one held true. Like a family photo album, this book will be of even greater interest a quarter of a century from now.

Jeremy Nicholas

There's a Place for Us: The Musical Theatre Works of Leonard Bernstein

By Helen Smith

Ashgate, HB, 318pp, £60 ISBN 978-1-4094-1169-7



No one's likely to read Helen Smith's study of Leonard Bernstein's theatre works for her

inventive prose style or devil-may-care wit. Smith writes sentences like 'The 1930s were vibrant and exhilarating years for the music scene in New York City', and one wonders how/when/why confusing phraseology like 'Bernstein's approach to composition is similar to Stravinsky's as he employs comparative techniques' ever made it past the copy editing stage. The surrounding context suggests she means 'comparable techniques'; but if 'comparative' is indeed the right word, we're not told what that might mean.

Smith is a choral conductor and musicologist based in Birmingham. *There's a Place for Us* is her first book and, if plundering her text for the odd instance of clunky sentence construction feels mean-spirited, I'm duty-bound to point out that Ashgate is charging an eye-watering sum for a book where too often meaning is marooned inside language that feels under-written and unsure of itself. This is a pity because Smith clearly has a profound love for Bernstein's music and ideas, and her nuts-and-bolts technical understanding of



Keyboard encounters: Caroline Benser interviewees (clockwise from top left) Jonathan Biss, Yuja Wang and Leif Ove Andsnes

how his music theatre pieces hang together is impeccable. She has plenty to say about Bernstein and has waded through all the existing sources - Humphrey Burton, Joan Peyser et al - with a train-spotter's eye for squirrelling away useful landmarks. Which makes those annoying lapses in rhetoric ever more frustrating.

In her final chapter, Smith concludes '[Bernstein] was not a great American composer...he was never really innovative, but absorbed and manipulated the music around him'. This passage stopped me dead in my reading. To reach page 273 of 300 and have an author undermine the assumed premise of her book is a mightily odd way to proceed. Flipping back through her words, to where Smith identifies symphonic thinking inside the melodic development of On the Town, or explains the aesthetic complexities of Mass - or how West Side Story dragged Broadway into dealing with 'adult' subjects - the message, surely, is that Bernstein was indeed innovative precisely because he absorbed and manipulated the music around him. Was Bernstein 'great' like, say, Bartók or



Leonard Bernstein: innovator or passenger?

Copland? Or perhaps that question simply demonstrates what a washed-up concept 'great composers' writing 'masterpieces' has become. Bernstein was certainly 'greater' than American composers who wrote flat-pack generic symphonies - he engaged with his times and questioned the old certainties.

Smith's constant referencing of Britten's War Requiem as she discusses Mass highlights another failing: a rather desperate (academically driven?) need to place Bernstein within a wider cultural context, which, as hard evidence fails to materialise, leads to closed circuits like 'It is undocumented whether Bernstein knew the [Cole] Porter song, but as it was a very successful number it is most likely he did'. And nor am I convinced Smith really 'gets' the symbolism behind Bernstein's selective adoption of 12-tone technique in his late-period opera A Quiet Place. When she dives inside Bernstein's scores, telling us how the 'hipster' scat-singing in Wonderful Town relates to Cab Calloway or revealing the jazz sources behind On the Town - that's when she is at her best. The rest drove me nuts.

Philip Clark

REPLAY

Rob Cowan's monthly survey of reissues and archive recordings

Mercury's fabled 'Living Presence' lives on

Dorati et al in The Collector's Edition from Mercury • Elgar from Toscanini

ew labels made a greater impact on the LP hi-fi market than Mercury in the heady days when the imprimatur 'Living Presence' signalled striking levels of realism and, once stereo burst in on the scene in the late 1950s, the promise of dramatically close balancing and in-your-face antiphonal interplay. For those of us old enough to recall the heyday of vinyl, the bold 'stereo' branding that was spread across the top of each Mercury sleeve still prompts a flush of excitement, not to mention the enticement of 'an Original 35mm Magnetic Film Recording', a real come-on if ever there was!

Back in the 1990s the Mercury legend made it to CD under the watchful eye of the label's recording director Wilma Cozart Fine, Antal Dorati's personal secretary in the days

'The bold "stereo" branding on each Mercury sleeve still prompts a flush of excitement'

when he conducted the Dallas Symphony. Even with full-on digital sound available for comparison, Mercury's achievement could hold its own and there are plenty of examples to prove the point included in this handsomely produced 51-disc set. The booklet is excellent, with a well-written history of the label, useful artist biographies and detailed essays on such special projects as 'The Civil War, its Music and its Sounds' and 'Mercury Living Presence going to Russia'. The Russian enterprise extended to brilliant and still competitive versions by Byron Janis of the two Liszt concertos (under Kyrill Kondrashin and Gennady Rozhdestvensky, respectively), and concertos by Prokofiev (No 3) and Rachmaninov (No 1) under Kondrashin. In addition to various solo works, Janis also makes his mark on concertos by Schumann (conducted by Stanisław

Skrowaczewski), Tchaikovsky (No 1, with Herbert Menges) and Rachmaninov (Nos 2 and 3, both under Dorati, the Third in particular a real stunner and very much in the manner of Janis's mentor Horowitz).

Another feted Mercury pianist was Gina Bachauer, a 'big' but rarely indulgent player whose personal brand of classicism suits Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth concertos (with Dorati and Skrowaczewski) and who certainly has the measure of Brahms's Second (Skrowaczewski). Bachauer also appears in the two Chopin concertos (with Dorati), and an all-French solo programme, including Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit, where Sir John Gielgud reads Christopher Fry's translations of poems by Alovsius Bertrand that specifically inspired Ravel. Other Mercury soloists include the cellist János Starker, who was in prime shape during the 1960s when these recordings were made: we're given various sonatas from the Baroque/early-Classical period, the two sonatas by Brahms and Mendelsssohn's Second (with György Sebok) and the complete Bach cello suites, as well as concertos by Dvořák, Lalo, Saint-Saëns (all under Dorati) and Schumann (Skrowaczewski). Lovely too to hear some superlative reissued recordings of violinist Henryk Szerying: no one played the Schumann Concerto (conducted here by Dorati) quite as persuasively as he did, and we're also given compelling, Dorati-led versions of concertos by Mendelssohn, Brahms and Khachaturian, as well as short pieces by Kreisler. And there's Yehudi Menuhin taped in Minneapolis under Dorati playing Bartók's Second Concerto, possibly Menuhin's best-recorded version of the piece.

As to the purely orchestral material, the usual Mercury suspects take the lion's share: Dorati, with the Minneapolis or London Symphony Orchestras in Stravinsky,

Khachaturian, Dvořák, Prokofiev, Bartók, etc; Paul Paray and the Detroit Symphony in Suppé and Berlioz; Howard Hanson and Frederick Fennell, and then for guitar lovers, there are the Romeros in music ranging from the Baroque to Flamenco. Groundbreaking mono recordings of Smetana, Bartók and the Mussorgsky-Ravel Pictures by the Chicago Symphony under Rafael Kubelík are included, all great to have of course (as is a brief bonus interview with Wilma Cozart Fine by Sedgwick Clark). But this is only half the Mercury CD legacy, and there are the many LPs that have yet to be 'officially' transferred to CD (and I'm not forgetting transfers already available from Pristine Classical and the Antal Dorati Society). So, a very good start, but here's hoping that a second volume is already in the pipeline.

THE RECORDINGS



'The Collector's Edition' Various artists Mercury (\$) (51 CDs) 478 3566

Global Toscanini

Guild Historical has come up with an interesting, competently refurbished programme of Toscanini material taken from various sources and involving six different orchestras. The highlight, for this listener at least, is the live June 1935 BBC Symphony Orchestra account of Elgar's Enigma Variations which, in 'Nimrod' and 'EDU.' especially, conveys a level of tension that borders on defiance. If ever a performance anticipated the trials that London would soon face - and triumph through - then this is it. I've never been quite so taken with Toscanini's 1941 Philadelphia recording of Schubert's Great which, for all its visceral excitement (there's that in spades) seems to

me to lack finesse and expressive subtlety. The other American (Victor) recording included, from 1929 this time, is a famously characterful account of Mozart's Haffner Symphony though Toscanini would later lessen the contrasts in tempo around the work's opening measures. Brahms's St Anthony Variations with the Philharmonia (1952), a fine performance, is already well known from the Testament release of the whole Royal Festival Hall Brahms cycle and although I was grateful to hear Toscanini and a young Nathan Milstein sparring their way through part of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in New York in 1936, 11 minutes' worth isn't really enough to make a valid critical judgment, and the sound leaves a good deal to be desired. More satisfying, though again sonically compromised, are Rossini's The Thieving Magpie Overture with the La Scala Orchestra (1946), and 'Siegfried's Funeral Music' with the Vienna Philharmonic in 1935, the former off its head with excitement, the latter, dignified but powerful.

THE RECORDINGS



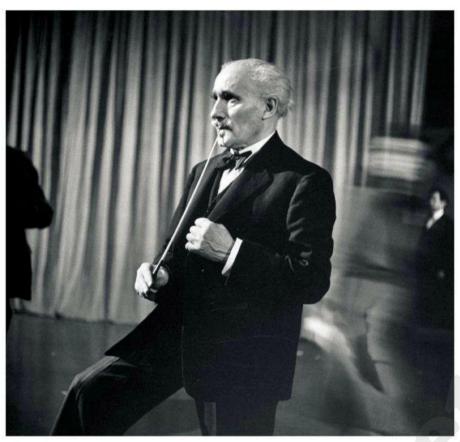
Various Cpsrs Recs, 1929-52 Toscanini

Guild © @ GHCD2384/85

Busch the conductor...

There are some historic conductors who, in terms of their musical personalities, are quite difficult to place. One such master - and he was a master - was the baton-wielder among the wonderful Busch brothers, Fritz, whose work at (for example) Glyndebourne and in Scandinavia yielded such rich musical results. Guild's latest Fritz Busch release includes a number of welcome rarities, which, while hardly top-of-the-range sound-wise, are good to have. They focus on a musical personality that, while lacking the kind of magnetism that was part and parcel of various 'big name' maestros from the same period (1930s and '40s), produced performances that have an innate sense of musical 'rightness' about them: Wand, Erich Kleiber, Rosbaud, Bour and Ansermet were all cut from a similar cloth. One of the highpoints of this particular collection (mostly with the Konsertförenings Orchestra Stockholm) is Louis Krasner's 1938 performance of Berg's Violin Concerto which, even in comparison with Krasner's other versions under Webern and Rodziński. suggests a potent spiritual bond with a wonderful work, while Busch retains a firm (though accommodating) hold on the score.

Busch conducts a lusty, big-boned account of Hindemith's Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber (1949),



Toscanini: 'conveys a level of tension that borders on defiance' in Elgar's Enigma Variations with the BBC SO in 1935

though the jazzier elements of the 'Turandot Scherzo' sound a mite stolid), a fiery account of Mozart's Così fan tutte Overture (Kungliga Teatern Stockholm, 1940), Berwald's attractive overture Estrella di Soria and a couple of fascinating curios, the imposing 'Ostinato' movement from Lars-Erik Larsson's Second Symphony and Busch's own orchestration of Max Reger's already fairly complex Fantasy on Wie schön leucht't uns der Morgenstern, Op 40 No 1.

THE RECORDINGS



Various Cpsrs Recs, 1938-49 Fritz Busch Guild ® GHCD2372

...and the Busch Quartet

Regis's three-disc collection devoted to Schubert recordings by the Busch Chamber Ensemble will likely prove revelatory to anyone who has yet to sample these magnificent recordings, all of which date from the 1930s. Perhaps the most remarkable is of Schubert's Piano Trio in E flat, where violinist Adolf Busch and pianist Rudolf Serkin (Adolf's son-in-law) are joined by Adolf's cellist brother, Hermann. What makes this particular reading so special is

a combination of tautness and warmth, a sense of classical style and a very personal brand of portamento that allows the string-playing to sound as intimate as the human voice in song. Much the same might be said of the Busch Quartet's rendition of Death and the Maiden, especially the eventful second movement, which builds so securely, and the dramatic finale. Schubert's last quartet (in G major) is one of his most austere large-scale works, on a par, mood-wise, with his desolate Winterreise song-cycle though occasional warming string textures help soften some of the harder blows. Again, the Busch Quartet deliver a towering performance, at once incisive and heartfelt, whereas the little B flat Quartet (D112), although more modest in scale, is a gem of a piece. And then there's Schubert's greatest work for violin and piano, the Fantasie in C where the symbiotic musical partnership of father- and son-in-law helps focus one of the most enigmatic pieces in the entire duosonata repertoire, music with a song at its heart but that nonetheless suggest a scale extending way beyond its 21-minute duration. The transfers are excellent. 6

THE RECORDINGS



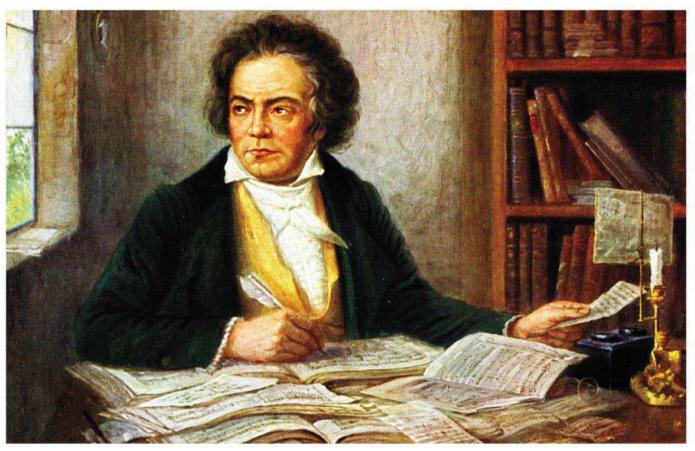
Schubert String Quartets, etc 📵 📵 **Busch Quartet** Reais (S) (3) RRC3012



THE SPECIALIST'S GUIDE TO...

Beethoven transcriptions

It is a brave composer who attempts to arrange or remake an original Beethoven score. But, says **Philip Clark**, the most successful are those who meet Beethoven on his own terms



Beethoven: creating the originals

hen the Schuppanzigh String Quartet buckled under the strain and refused to play the last movement of Beethoven's String Quartet No 13, the composer's gnarly response – 'What care I about you and your bloody fiddles?' – ought to stand as the guiding principle of anyone attempting an arrangement, or remake, of an original Beethoven score.

There are two conflicting definitions of 'transcription' at play here – transcription as arrangement, designed to take the listener into a world of make-believe where Beethoven's Violin Concerto was

written for clarinet or piano, or where his late-period string quartets were meant to be performed by string orchestras. And then there's transcription as creative rewrite: notes, harmonies, orchestration, context altered as a critique, or commentary, upon Beethoven, where the historical distance between 'now' and 'then' needs to be clearly heard.

Transcriptions, in both senses of the word, work best when they meet Beethoven on his own terms: posing questions about compositional material, challenging comfort zones of our perception of that material, pushing at the accepted niceties of instrumental technique. Any transcription that does indeed give a metaphorical damn about musicians' 'bloody fiddles' – marooning Beethoven's clarity of purpose inside a compromised middle ground – is probably not a good one.

Surely Beethoven would have preferred to hear his music promoting risk and the fear of failure? His unerring sense of where to place material on an instrument, always re-examining the timbral grain, is not discussed as often as it might be. But one thing is for sure – he wasn't about making the implausible plausible. **6**



• Arrangements for Viola and Piano

Toccata Classics (F) TOCCO108 Here are three Beethoven Viola Sonatas cooked up from his String

Trio, Op 8 (by Karl Xaver Kleinheinz), his Op 20 Septet (by Friedrich Hermann) and his Horn Sonata (by Paul Silverthorne). The Horn Sonata sounds absolutely idiomatic; but the epic scale of the String Trio and Septet arrangements is suggestive of a Beethovenian spirit that is more questioning and authentic. It's always good to hear instrumentalists meeting challenges they've set themselves.

Paul Silverthorne va David Owen Norris pf



💿 Symphonies Nos 1-9, transcribed by Liszt

Teldec (\$) (6) 2564 60865-2 Liszt's transcriptions aimed to retain as much orchestral/

harmonic detail as possible. The most obvious problem occurs in the Ninth - just how is a pianist meant to convey the brightness and energetic thrust of those final pages? The Fourth's prologue and the airborne piccolo whistles and double-bass rumble of the Pastoral's thunderstorm also present problems. Katsaris plays these transcriptions inquisitively, like the insolvable problems they are. Cyprien Katsaris pf



Symphony No 5, transcribed by Liszt

Sonv Classics ® 88697 14806-2 It's fair comment - this record probably tells us more about the

scope of Glenn Gould's imagination and ambition than anything about Beethoven per se, but this 1967 recording was a high point of Gould's career. He fesses up: bars in the finale were overdubbed. but given the fire-finding-its-form nature and devil-may-care momentum of Gould's playing you wonder why this was necessary - perhaps simply because he loved mixing desk knobs and levers? Glenn Gould pf



Symphony No 7 – Allegretto: Theme and Variations

Telarc (F) CD83580

The French 'Play Bach Trio'

jazz pianist offers an arrangement and set of 10 variations on Beethoven's most affecting symphonic slow movement. Some may wince at the sudden backbeat in Loussier's arrangement of the theme, but his variations cogently explore Beethoven's theme from all its melodic, harmonic and gestural perspectives. As usual with Loussier, the reality manages to better the idea.

Jacques Loussier Trio



Reorchestration of Symphony No 9 by Mahler

Centaur (F) CRC2107

Mahler felt this necessary because

'the orchestra of Beethoven's day was totally insufficient...cramped and restricted'. Mahler bolstered the woodwind parts, placed the wind off-stage for the Turkish march and added new horn lines. This performance is endlessly intriguing, even if the final conclusion must be that Beethoven's original orchestration had a well-judged restraint that Mahler torpedoes.

Cincinnati PO / Gerhard Samuel



5 Blondy & DJ Lenar play Mauricio Kagel's 'Ludwig van'

Bôłt Records (F) BRPOP2

Kagel's Ludwig van was already a

meta-transcription - a collage where Beethovenian fragments bleed into each other. Frédéric Blondy and DJ Lenar's album takes that idea to its logical end point, collaging different recordings of Kagel's piece, and splicing new material into the flow. DJ Lenar spins late Beethoven string quartets, jamming vinyl records into grooves anchored around game-changing 'illegal' chromatic notes. Frédéric Blondy pf DJ Lenar

Clarinet Concerto

DG (E) 457 652-2GH

When this album was released, it caused quite a stir. Beethoven's 'Clarinet Concerto' turned out

to be Mikhail Pletnev's arrangement of the Violin Concerto, made, he said, because 'the clarinet needs big works'. Michael Collins plays immaculately but the clarinet's attack and detached arpeggios don't fit Beethoven's material in the first movement. a telling lesson in how specifically the composer allied instrumental timbre to melodic line.

Michael Collins c/ Russian National Orchestra / Mikhail Pletnev



Piano Concertos – Complete

Brilliant Classics (3) 93653 Secreted alongside Friedrich Gulda's concerto cycle is

Beethoven's piano arrangement of his Violin Concerto. My immediate thought was that this works better than the Clarinet Concerto because we know how Beethoven piano concertos go. The composer added impressive new cadenzas, but padded-out harmonies, decorative arpeggios and extra Alberti bass give the game away. This is a charming, but obvious, genuine fake. Friedrich Gulda pf Vienna PO / Horst Stein



Pierre Henry -Remixe Sa Dixième Symphonie

Philips (F) 462 821-2 Musique concrète pioneer

Pierre Henry uses recordings of Beethoven's nine symphonies to manufacture a 'Tenth Symphony'. By juxtaposing and overlaying equivalent structural points of arrival and departure from within the original canon. Henry dives inside the substructures of Beethoven's thinking and ends by drizzling electronically deconstructed fragments of Beethoven over the finale of the Ninth Symphony. Pierre Henry elec

String Quartets Opp 131 & 135

DG B 6 477 669-OGB6



Leonard Bernstein once described his performance of Beethoven's String Quartet, Op 131 - made in 1977 with the strings of the Vienna Philharmonic - as the standout moment of his recording career, and it remains an extraordinary document. The staggered string entries in the first movement, played tutti, come out sounding like a historical mirror to Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste, while elsewhere the added weight leans towards Brahms or Bruckner. With the dimensions changed, the material shifts fundamentally and this transcription lifts Beethoven out of his era. Just before his death, Bernstein applied the same concept to Op 135.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra / Leonard Bernstein



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear a movement of Beethoven's String Quartet Op 131 played by the strings of the Vienna Philharmonic

ARE YOU A SPECIALIST?

Share your recommendations for great recordings of Beethoven transcriptions on our forum by visiting gramophone.co.uk or suggest recordings by virtuoso pianists - the

subject of next issue's specialist, Jeremy Nicholas.



THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

A worthy sacrifice?

In **Mozart's Idomeneo**, the composer avoided the original tragic ending of the ancient Mediterranean myth, but was still forced to renounce much of his music for the sake of the performers. The resultant variety of existing versions has led to a mixed bag of recordings, discovers **Richard Wigmore**

ozart's widow, Constanze, declared that the time he spent in Munich in winter 1780-81 composing and rehearsing *Idomeneo* was the happiest of his life. His euphoric letters home bear this out. In Mannheim in 1777 he'd told Elector Carl Theodor, 'To write an opera is my dearest wish.' That opera for the Mannheim court and its orchestra – relocated to Munich after Carl Theodor became Elector of Bavaria – was *Idomeneo*, re di Creta, premiered at François Cuvilliés's Munich theatre on January 29, 1781.

Although Mozart may have been consulted, the opera's theme was probably chosen by cultivated Francophile Carl Theodor. Doubtless influenced by the sensational success of Gluck's two Iphigénie operas, the subject was another ancient Mediterranean myth of human sacrifice, its brutality mitigated in keeping with Enlightenment ideals. An old French libretto (set by André Campra in 1712) was sent to the Salzburg chaplain-cum-poet Giambattista Varesco for a modern, Italianising makeover, entailing, inter alia, the omission of the allegorical prologue and the softening of the original tragic ending in which, true to the mythical sources, Idamante is sacrificed in fulfilment of his father's vow to Neptune.

In close collaboration with Mozart, Varesco produced a setting that offered powerful situations and four sharply drawn characters: the Cretan king Idomeneo, his son Idamante, the captive Trojan princess Ilia, and Elettra, orphaned daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Mozart's musical language had grown deeper and more complex in the wake of the Mannheim-Paris journey of 1777-78, his unrequited feelings for Aloysia Weber and the death of his mother. The dark intensity of works such as the A minor Piano Sonata, K310, and the Sinfonia concertante, K364, is reflected on a larger scale in Idomeneo, a work of unique, impassioned richness that constantly challenges 18th-century operatic norms.

True, the reckless abundance of musical invention throws up problems in performance,

as Mozart himself recognised when he pruned Act 3 before the premiere. But with this Enlightenment tale of a ruler enmeshed in the consequences of his own actions, and of the passage of power from age to youth, Mozart forged a new kind of *opera seria*, unprecedented in its range of orchestral colour, its dramatic sweep and its unflinching exploration of emotional extremes.

Sisters-in-law Dorothea and Lisel Wendling proved ideal as Ilia and Elettra, but Mozart had to tread carefully around Anton Raaff in the title-role. Raaff's wooden demeanour was shared by young soprano castrato Vincenzo dal Prato (Idamante), whose inability to learn his part was one reason why Mozart cut out several stretches of recitative before the premiere.

ALL CHANGE

After the Munich performances, Mozart revived Idomeneo just once, for a concert performance in Vienna in 1786 with a largely amateur aristocratic cast. Castrated barons were not an option, so he duly rewrote the role of Idamante for a tenor, transposing his existing music and providing two new numbers: an alternative love duet for Idamante and Ilia; and a new scena con rondò at the start of Act 2, comprising an elaborate recitative and an aria with obbligato violin, 'Non temer, amato bene', whose suave, leisured lyricism rather jars in the dramatic context. Other changes included the drastic pruning of Idomeneo's central aria di bravura, 'Fuor del mar', and the omission of the role of the king's confidant Arbace.

The upshot is a bewildering array of alternative versions of an opera for which Mozart left no definitive text. Indeed, no two recordings include exactly the same music. Long deemed a virtually unstageable museum piece, *Idomeneo* was fair game for scalpel-wielders of the 1950s and '60s. Its reputation in Britain received a decisive boost with the 1951 Glyndebourne production conducted by Fritz Busch, using a (heavily cut) composite of the Munich and Vienna texts. Busch died later that

year, and it was his successor, John Pritchard, who in 1956 directed Glyndebourne forces in the first 'complete' *Idomeneo*. The prime reasons for acquiring this recording are the warmly sung Ilia of Sena Jurinac and the honeyed, if slightly disengaged, Idamante of Léopold Simoneau. Richard Lewis, who for over two decades owned the role at Glyndebourne, is a dignified but rather monochrome Idomeneo. There's an amiable, easy-going quality to Pritchard's conducting, but it catches fire in the climactic sequence at the end of Act 2. But wholesale cuts, involving grating key shifts in recitatives, will rule this version out for most collectors.

Still, the text used by Pritchard is a model of Mozartian probity by comparison with the performance under Ferenc Fricsay recorded at the 1961 Salzburg Festival. Quite apart from the textual abominations perpetrated by musicologist Bernard Paumgartner, it suffers from an unalluring pair of tenors, a rough chorus and shaky coordination between stage and pit. Elisabeth Grümmer's potentially exciting Elettra is marred by tuning problems and a glaring wrong entry in her first aria.

Using essentially the same barbarous Paumgartner travesty, **Peter Maag**'s 1965 Rome performance is another non-starter. But Maag's direction is more dramatic than Fricsay's; and there are intermittent pleasures from Agnes Giebel's firmly sung (if distinctly mature) Ilia, and the Elettra, Irmgard Stadler, who displays ample temperament in fury or distress and manages her dulcet aria 'Idol mio' better than most.

A 1964 Glyndebourne recording, again conducted by **Pritchard**, has recently emerged, on Glyndebourne's own label. Lewis's Idomeneo and Pritchard's affectionate but too-casual direction of the same clumsily cut text as in 1956 remain much as before. While the 29-year-old Pavarotti seems relentlessly determined to present Idamante as a macho alpha male, his singing has an undeniable visceral excitement. The Elettra, Enriqueta Tarrés, has attitude in spades, but can go

off the rails, in the wrong sense. The most satisfying performance comes from the young Gundula Janowitz as Ilia, singing with her trademark bell-like purity.

Damaging cuts also afflict the 1977 Dresden recording conducted by Karl Böhm, though the text here - based on the 1786 Vienna score, but including some of Arbace's music – is fuller than in any of the versions discussed so far. Idamante's aria with violin obbligato is included for the first time on disc. Except for an unusually urgent quartet, Böhm's tempi are on the stately side. The barcarolle chorus 'Placido è il mar' conjures a glassy calm such as 18th-century sailors dreaded. That superb Classical stylist Edith Mathis is among the loveliest of Ilias. Predictably, Peter Schreier's Idamante is involved, word-alive, but rather gritty of tone; Wiesław Ochman, not quite comfortable in coloratura, also 'lives' his role, though his sappy, italianate timbre can harden under pressure. Julia Varady, always at her best in the portrayal of extreme characters, is a duly anguished Elettra, who almost triumphs over Böhm's cautious tempo in her 'mad scene'.

Issued to mark the 200th anniversary of the premiere, Nikolaus Harnoncourt's Idomeneo was the earliest to replicate closely Mozart's Munich performances, cuts and all. So for the first time we have a soprano Idamante (underlining his youthful impetuosity, as well as the generation gap between him and Idomeneo), both of Arbace's arias and the final ballet. There are occasional Harnoncourtisms, including unconvincing (usually slow) tempi and exaggeratedly clipped articulation. But as a theatrical experience this recording knocks spots off all its predecessors bar a 1968 version from Colin Davis which has dropped out of the catalogue. The recitatives drive the action forward with the freedom and expressive intensity of heightened speech. Orchestral textures are sharp and lean, with pungent woodwind (in this most wind-saturated of all Mozart's operas) and rasping valveless brass. Harnoncourt's cast was chosen more for

dramatic credibility than vocal beauty, though the teak-voiced Simon Estes is the most sonorous of Oracles. All three women have moments of shrillness. But Werner Hollweg conveys both the king's authority and his despair in the original, long version of 'Fuor del mar'. Felicity Palmer, abetted by baleful horns, distils such venom in Elettra's first aria that the omission of her final aria, following Mozart's precedent, is all the more frustrating – the one serious loss in the chosen text here.

At the furthest extreme from Harnoncourt is the opulently cast 1983 Decca version, with Pritchard yet again at the helm. With his Vienna forces he uses a much fuller text than at Glyndebourne, though 'Fuor del mar' is performed in its shorter version, and there are swingeing cuts in Idomeneo's valedictory recitative and aria. If sometimes too heroically forceful, Pavarotti is always compelling in a role that suits him far better than Idamante. Lucia Popp, with her distinctive bittersweet timbre, is especially moving in Ilia's Act 2 aria of chastened joy, 'Se il padre perdei'. But unlike almost every other Elettra, Edita Gruberova is happier in 'Idol mio' than in her spitfire outbursts, while Agnes Baltsa belies her fiery reputation by singing the smoothest, and blandest, Idamante on disc. 'Bland' also sums up Pritchard's direction, which seems to have lost what dramatic life it had in his Glyndebourne recordings. Time and again pain and conflict are anaesthetised by sluggish tempi and the silkily beautiful playing of the Vienna Philharmonic. Even the climactic quartet lacks tension.

That miraculous, harmonically daring quartet in which the four protagonists express their contrasting emotions in a sonata-form structure of inexorably mounting tension is a highlight of **Colin Davis**'s 1991 Philips recording. Elsewhere, though, Davis's direction of what is essentially the uncut Munich text is consistently more measured than on his deleted earlier recording. True, slowish speeds by no means exclude inner vitality; and the choral and orchestral

contributions are fine. The storm that ends Act 2 is as cataclysmic as any on disc. Davis has never had much truck with 'authenticity', and for all its merits (including plangent-toned Francisco Araiza as Idomeneo, especially moving in the sacrifice scene, and the intense, if feminine-sounding, Idamante of Susanne Mentzer) this performance already seemed old-fashioned when it appeared two decades ago. Recitatives are burdened by an overweight continuo; and as on all recordings from the 1950s to the '70s, appoggiaturas are only fitfully applied, leaving too many phrase-endings blunt where they should be gracefully expressive.

Crucial appoggiaturas are also in short supply in the starrily cast 1994 Met Opera recording under James Levine. Heidi Grant Murphy is a merely sweet Ilia. But this is a more completely satisfying performance than Davis's. The stars - including Cecilia Bartoli as the most impassioned and volatile Idamante on disc (no one rivals her subtle colouring of Italian words), and Thomas Hampson, who vindicates the inclusion of Arbace's potentially tedious arias - live up to their billing. On the face of it, Plácido Domingo's style, especially his habit of sliding into notes from below, is all wrong for Mozart. Yet criticism is all but silenced by the bronzed splendour of his tone and his profound identification with Idomeneo's plight: more's the pity, then, that he sings only the shorter version of 'Fuor del mar', and loses his tender aria of farewell 'Torna la pace'.

AUTHENTICITY INTERVENES

Levine's was the last *Idomeneo* to remain virtually untouched by the 'authentic' movement. By the early 1990s the opera had received revelatory makeovers from both Harnoncourt and, in the first-ever periodinstrument version, **John Eliot Gardiner**. The latter's trademark mix of scrupulous scholarship (his text reproduces what Mozart performed in Munich, with the cut numbers reinstated) and theatrical excitement shines through every bar. While the hieratic scenes of





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A CLOSE SECOND

The cast is uniformly good, and Fischer's dramatic pacing, characterisation and care for orchestral colour and nuance are second to none. Pity about the cuts.





THE DVD CHOICE

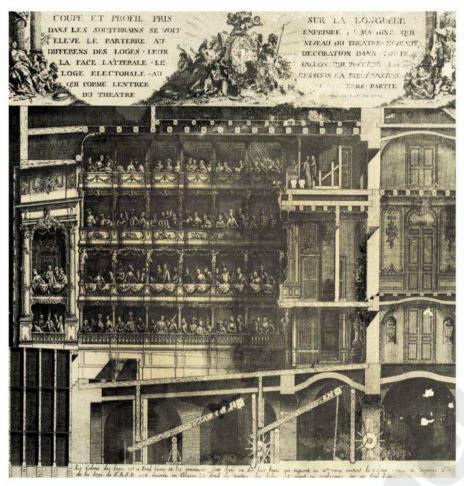
Camerata Salzburg / **Norrington** Decca (M) (2) 220 074 3169 DH2

This modern-dress production will not be to every taste. But for musical and dramatic intensity, this Salzburg staging eclipses the DVD competition.

Act 3 have all the gravitas you could wish for, Gardiner makes the opera a profoundly human drama. Recitatives, lightly accompanied by fortepiano and cello, move at a natural, conversational pace; and Gardiner sweeps one number inevitably into the next, conceiving each act in a single thrilling span. As the stricken king, Anthony Rolfe Johnson rails magnificently in 'Fuor del mar', and distils a chastened serenity in his valedictory 'Torna la pace'. Anne Sofie von Otter, in glowing voice, gives Idamante's Act 1 arias an unusually introspective cast; Sylvia McNair is the most limpid, if not the most sensuous, of Ilias, while Hillevi Martinpelto catches the pathos within Elettra's vengeful fury, and finds a lyrical grace for her momentary dream of bliss.

Likewise presenting *Idomeneo* in all its sprawling richness is the version recorded at the 2001 Edinburgh Festival under Charles Mackerras. From the first bars of the overture, this performance bristles with dramatic tension. Mackerras has the knack of making every tempo seem inevitable, and with lithe playing from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra he reveals as much of the opera's sumptuous orchestral detail as does Gardiner. Ian Bostridge's light lyric tenor inevitably sounds too youthful for the tormented king, though he partially compensates with dramatic involvement and the graceful finish of his phrasing. 'Fuor del mar' here acquires an uncommonly reflective cast. As Idamante, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson gives a performance of almost painful emotional immediacy. And both rival princesses are superb: Lisa Milne catches better than any other soprano the sense of joyous release in Ilia's song to the breezes, 'Zeffiretti lusinghieri'; and Barbara Frittoli summons the fire for Elettra's frenzied eruptions and brings an almost erotic warmth to 'Idol mio'. Anthony Rolfe Johnson, smokier of tone than when he sang Idomeneo for Gardiner a decade earlier, vindicates the inclusion of Arbace's arias. On the downside, the Edinburgh chorus is enthusiastic rather than polished, with some raw sounds among the men.

The Opera North-based recording in Chandos's Opera in English series, conducted by David Parry, suffers from cutting even more zealous than Mozart's own. The blink-andyou'll-miss-it finale is one among several casualties. But if you fancy Idomeneo in the conductor's own, mainly convincing, English translation (though 'Disaster, run faster', aka 'Corriamo, fuggiamo', unleashes a tsunami of choral sibilants), this is well worth hearing: for Bruce Ford's eloquent Idomeneo, nobility and anguish in ideal equilibrium, Rebecca Evans's sensuous Ilia, some thrilling choral singing and (save one or two unforgiving tempi) the theatrical flair of Parry's conducting. Susan Patterson, squally in 'Idol mio', is a prime candidate for the most vicious Elettra on disc.



Valerian Funck's 1771 etching of the auditorium of the Residenztheater, Munich, where Idomeneo was premiered

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

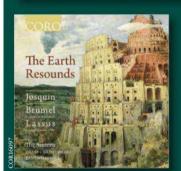
DATE/	ARTISTS	RECORD COMPANY (REVIEW DATE)
1956	Lewis ^{Ido} , Simoneau ^{Ida} , Jurinac ^{IIIa} , Glyndebourne Fest Op / Pritcha	EMI ⊕ ② 573848-2 (nla)
1961	Kmentt ^{ido} , Haefliger ^{ida} , Lorengar ^{illa} , VPO / Fricsay	DG (S) (25 discs) 477 9111GB25
1964	Lewis ^{ldo} , Pavarotti ^{lda} , Janowitz ^{lla} , Glyndebourne Fest Op / Pritcha	Glyndebourne (P) (2) GFOCD006-64 (8/10)
1965	Bertocci ^{ldo} , Jelden ^{lda} , Giebel ^{lia} , RAI SO / Maag	Arts (M) (2) 43063-2
1970	Pears ^{ido} , Pashley ^{ida} , Harper ^{ilia} , ECO / Britten	cca (M) (2) 🔐 074 3258DH2; (S) (7) 🔐 074 3366DH7
1977	Ochman ^{ldo} , Schreier ^{lda} , Mathis ^{IIIa} , Staatskapelle Dresden / Böhm	DG ® ③ ₱ 429 864-2GX3 (12/90)
1980	Hollweg ^{ldo} , Schmidt ^{lda} , Yakar ^{llla} , Zürich Op / Harnoncourt	Teldec ® 3 2564 69126-7; ® 9 2564 62331-2
1982	Pavarotti ^{ldo} , Von Stade ^{lda} , Cotrubas ^{lia} , NY Met Op / Levine	DG 🕅 ② 🙅 073 4234GH2
1983	Langridge ^{ldo} , Hadley ^{lda} , Kenny ^{llia} , Glyndebourne Fest Op / Haitinl	k
	NVC Arts	(f) 🙅 5046 73922-2 (12/04); (M) 4) 🙅 5186 53402-2
1983	Pavarotti ^{ldo} , Baltsa ^{lda} , Popp ^{lia} , Vienna St Op / Pritchard	Decca (M) (3) 475 7041DM3
1990	Rolfe Johnson do, Von Otter da, McNair da, EBS / Gardiner	Archiv M 3 431 674-2AH3 (6/91)
1991	Araizaldo, Mentzerlda, Hendrickslla, Bavarian Rad SO / C Davis	Philips (\$) (3)?? 🕒 475 7376; (\$) (9) 🗗 464 910-2PB9
1994	Domingo ^{ldo} , Bartoli ^{lda} , Murphy ^{llia} , NY Met Op / Levine	DG ® ③ → 447 737-2GH3 (1/97)
2001	Bostridgeldo, Hunt Lieberson da, Milnella, SCO / Mackerras	EMI (F) (3) 557260-2 (9/02); (B) (3) 948238-2
2003	Ford ^{ldo} , Montague ^{lda} , Evans ^{llia} , Op North / Parry (sung in Eng)	Chandos (2/04)
2004	Streit ^{ido} , Ganassi ^{ida} , Blancas Gulín ^{ilia} , Naples San Carlo Th / Guida i	rini Naxos (\$) (3) 8 660250/52 (1/11);
	Dynamic 🖲 ② 🙅 DV33463	
2005	Elsner ^{Ido} , Hammarström ^{Ida} , Bonde-Hansen ^{IIIa} , Danish Rad Sinf / A	Fischer Dacapo (B) (4)
2006	Gambill ^{ido} , Vermillion ^{ida} , Stallmeister ^{ilia} , Dresden St Op / Luisi (arr	R Strauss) Orfeo (F) (2) C701 0721
2006	Vargas ^{Ido} , Kožená ^{Ida} , Siurina ^{IIIa} , Camerata Salzburg / Norrington	Decca M 2 🙅 074 3169DH2
2006	Schmunck ^{ldo} , Soloviy ^{lda} , Forte ^{llia} , Ital Intl Orch / Rovaris (arr R Stra	auss) Dynamic (F) (2) CDS532 (A/O7)
2008	Croft ^{ldo} , Fink ^{lda} , Im ^{IIIa} , Freiburg Baroque Orch / Jacobs	Harmonia Mundi ® 4 HMC90 2036/8 (8/09)
2008	Ainsley ^{ido} , Breslik ^{ida} , Banse ^{illa} , Bavarian St Op / Nagano	Medici Arts 🖲 ② 🙅 207 2448
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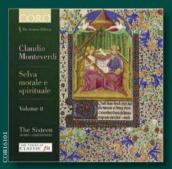
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I'd give a wide berth to **Marco Guidarini**'s Naples performance. (There's also a DVD of the stark, stylised production from which the recording is taken.) The soloists have their moments, especially Iano Tamar's darkly smouldering Lady Macbeth-like Elettra (on the DVD she leaps, unconvincingly, into the sea after her mad scene) and Kurt Streit's stern, tightly focused Idomeneo. Jörg Schneider sings Arbace's Act 3 aria as well as anyone on disc. But the orchestral playing is routine, too many numbers plod, and the beefy and wobbly choral singing becomes intolerably approximate in the storm scenes.

Far more compelling is **Adam Fischer**'s studio version with the period-aware Danish Radio Sinfonietta and the Danish National Choir - sonorous, always eagerly alive to character and situation. Once or twice Fischer takes controversial liberties with tempo. But his direction combines fine detail with a powerful dramatic sweep. No other performance makes you aware of how much of the great quartet is marked piano and sotto voce. Henriette Bonde-Hansen's wondering tenderness in Ilia's 'Se il padre perdei' is complemented by ravishing phrasing from the wind quartet, agents of consolation and healing. In the titlerole Christian Elsner is profoundly moving in his agonised recitatives but strenuous-sounding in his arias. Kristina Hammarström, with an intense, youthful glow in her tone, is among the most involving of Idamantes; and Raffaella Milanesi, like Martinpelto for Gardiner, brings out the humanity and vulnerability, as well as the fury, of Elettra. Given that the performance runs to four discs, it's a pity there was no room for 'Torna la pace'. And why did Fischer halve Idomeneo's austerely beautiful prayer to Neptune, 'Accogli, o rè del mar'?

True to form, René Jacobs directs the most iconoclastic Idomeneo on disc. He is also the only conductor to present every note of the opera as it was originally conceived, including by far the longest version of the Oracle's speech, which was jettisoned by Mozart. As ever, his fortepiano continuo is hyperactive, adding mini-cadenzas and fantasies that can border on the facetious. Yet for all its idiosyncrasies, which include liberties with tempo that leave Fischer standing, Jacobs's recording does convey the life-and-death urgency of the drama with uncommon vividness. The superlative Freiburg wind players are eloquent additional 'voices' in the drama, as are the winds in Gardiner's and Fischer's recordings. Richard Croft is a lyrical, inward Idomeneo in the Bostridge mould, Sunhae Im graceful but too soubrettish of tone to convey Ilia's spiritual growth. Outstanding, though, are Bernarda Fink's tender, impassioned, stylistically immaculate Idamante, and Alexandrina Pendatchanska's viscerally exciting Elettra. Even 'Idol mio'

has a neurotic edge, enhanced by the ornamentation in the reprise.

A faintly grotesque pendant to this Idomeneo survey comes courtesy of two recordings of the version Richard Strauss made for a 1931 Vienna production, at a time when the opera was deemed beyond the pale. 'A gross act of rape' was writer Alfred Einstein's verdict on Strauss's efforts to revive the perceived dodo with cuts, reorderings, reorchestrations and additional numbers of his own. In the process Elettra became high priestess Ismene, fanatically guarding Greek racial purity -'a Goebbels in petticoats', writes Chris Walton in the Cambridge Opera Handbook on Idomeneo. Strauss's travesty can exert a kind of lurid fascination. If you do feel yourself being sucked in, avoid the rough-and-ready Dynamic recording under Corrado Rovaris in favour of the better-played, sung and conducted Salzburg Festival performance from Fabio Luisi, with Britta Stallmeister (as Ilia) distilling an echt-Straussian silvery radiance.

THE SMALL SCREEN

The eight available DVDs range from the homespun BBC production conducted by Benjamin Britten (Peter Pears, a haunted Idomeneo-as-Grimes, omits 'Fuor del mar', which alone makes this a textual non-starter) to Dieter Dorn's violent, blood-bespattered staging from the restored Cuvilliés Theatre where the opera had its premiere. In this postmodern production (with athletic and excitable conducting from Kent Nagano), Crete is portraved from the outset as a dysfunctional society replete with images of decay and devastation. All the characters, even Juliane Banse's characteristically intense Ilia, are disturbed. Arbace specialises in self-mutilation. But amid the gore and ugliness there is also a touching humanity and emotional truthfulness, epitomised by the recognition scene between Idamante (attractively sung by tenor Pavol Breslik) and John Mark Ainsley's Idomeneo: stricken, vulnerable, yet rising superbly to his moment of defiant heroism in 'Fuor del mar'.

Less disturbing, and possibly destined to wear better, is Trevor Nunn's 1980s Glyndebourne production of Mozart's Vienna version, the third – and best – of the DVD recordings from Glyndebourne. Big hair (80s-style) and Idamante's silly I Claudius-meets-Up Pompeii wig apart, Nunn's staging is starkly handsome, based on Minoan and (in the garden scene of Act 3) Japanese images. Jerry Hadley is too consistently loud, and his histrionic limitations are exposed in close-up. But Philip Langridge, haggard and traumatised, is a moving Idomeneo, while the magnificently imperious Carol Vaness never lets you forget that Elettra is the daughter of Agamemnon. Bernard Haitink conducts





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with a sure touch, though the stage-pit co-ordination can be rocky.

For DVD versions with a mezzo Idamante, the choice is between Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's monumental, geometrically symmetrical Met Opera staging conducted by Levine, with Pavarotti long on decibels, short on subtlety and sweetness (he sings with more nuance on the Pritchard CD), and the 2006 Salzburg production by Ursel and Karl-Ernst Herrmann, with Roger Norrington in the pit. In the latter minimalist, modern-dress staging (Ilia and Elettra vie with each other in sartorial glamour), with the orchestra seated in a pit in the centre, the characters interact with an intensity unmatched by rival DVDs. There are irritants, not least the constant presence of a malignant, lurking Neptune. But the cast, including Ramón Vargas's heroically impassioned king ('Fuor del mar' rightly brings the house down) and Magdalena Kožená's coltishly gauche Idamante, is as fine as any on CD, while Norrington's conducting is taut, detailed and always sympathetic to his singers. If you prefer a more conventional staging and a tenor Idamante, go for the Haitink.

The final CD choice lies between Mackerras, Fischer, Gardiner and Jacobs, with a glance at the erratically cast Harnoncourt, and with Levine an alternative for those who like their Mozart on an ample scale. Fischer might get my vote if his version were complete. Jacobs, too eccentric for a central recommendation, is let down by his pallid Ilia, while Mackerras, with an infallible Mozartian instinct, has a controversial Idomeneo in Bostridge and an unwieldy chorus. So for a final choice in the opera that Mozart is said to have loved above all his others it has to be Gardiner: not by default, but for the uniform excellence of his cast and the mingled sensitivity, gravitas and fire of his conducting. 6





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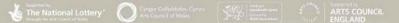


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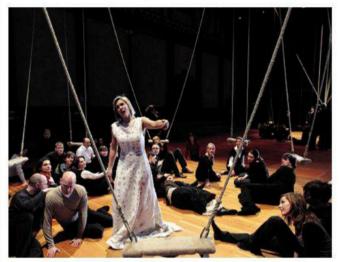


MUSICAL JOURNEYS

Gramophone's monthly search for the best classical music experiences around the world

Brahms without barriers

Singers enfold the audience with a Human Requiem from Brahms and Sandig in Berlin, writes **AJ Goldmann**



The Berlin Radio Choir staging Brahms's Ein deutsches Requiem

he hottest classical ticket in Berlin this February was *Human Requiem*, an unorthodox staging of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* which derived much of its energy from the decision by director Jochen Sandig to integrate singers and audience. The estimable Berlin Radio Choir, under chief conductor Simon Halsey, performed the work at Radialsystem V, a versatile arts venue housed in a former pumping station that Sandig co-founded with his wife, the choreographer Sasha Waltz, six years ago.

Sandig told *Gramophone* that he first had the idea for a staged version of Brahms's Requiem about a decade ago, after he had seen the piece performed in a traditional concert setting. 'My starting point was, in fact, that I wanted the singers to be mixed with the audience,' he explained, adding that, in the first movement, he wanted the singers to be as inconspicuous as possible. 'I really wanted them to mingle with the public. I didn't want them to arrive with applause and start singing.'

From the very beginning, we, the audience, became an active participant in the performance. At the entrance, we were instructed to drape felt slippers over our shoes and shuffle into the auditorium. The lights dimmed halfway and the Requiem's opening chords emanated from a grand piano (Brahms's version for four hands was being used). Suddenly, hushed voices joined in, their origin at first mysterious. Necks turned and eyes darted this way and that, focusing on the chorus members standing unassumingly among the audience. Those first few moments were among the evening's most powerful, with those of us in the audience feeling engulfed by the performance. Sandig said that the piano version was used for both practical and artistic reasons. 'To do this project with a full orchestra would be very complicated. I prefer having the choir in the centre, as the main figure that doesn't need to compete with an orchestra.'

Sandig found different strategies to position the chorus for each of the work's six movements. The most successful of these was the

staging of the grief-filled second movement. Here, clusters of singers carried the soloists aloft on their shoulders chanting the funereal march of 'Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras'. It was a significant challenge for the singers, physically. 'They barely had any acting experience,' said Sandig. 'It was a big change for singers used to having a large distance from the audience to be in such close contact.'

Sandig spoke highly of conductor Simon Halsey and his willingness to go along with the concept. 'Simon trusted my vision but he also gave me important information at the very beginning. He told me that in certain musical moments, such as the third-movement fugue, the singers need to be closer than in others,' the director explained.

As was to be expected, the production's peculiarities had a few interesting musical consequences. Occasionally a flock of sopranos would sweep by, or a robust tenor would howl into my ear,

'Konrad Jarnot glided across the floor, fixing the audience with his gaze'

temporarily upending the balance of Brahms's harmonies. But for the most part, it worked. And that it worked as well as it did was testament to the superb training, coordination and talent of all involved.

Although the singers shared the floor with the audience, they interacted mostly with each other. Occasionally, they would hazard an encounter with a spectator. I was tickled to see a female singer go up to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*'s music critic, Jan Brachmann, and press her hand against his chest.

The capable soloists were also part of the general scheme. The English bass Konrad Jarnot seemed to materialise out of thin air in the third movement, 'Herr, lehre doch mich', as he glided across the floor, fixing the audience with his intense gaze. The German soprano Marlis Petersen made her fifth-movement entrance singing 'Ihr habt nur Traurigkeit' on a felt-lined swing. Like her fellow chorus-members and the sensitive pianists, Philip Mayers and Phillip Moll, she was able to stay focused on the music while respecting the unusual wishes of Sandig and his team.

Reverb in Camden

Philip Clark on the innovative Reverb Festival

Why at the Roundhouse in North London have they always approached classical music a little differently? Could it be because the venue sits slightly off the well-trodden classical track? Or because its cavernous, Gothic vista invariably prompts memories of rock mythology and casual nudity? (This is where in 1968 The Doors played their one and only UK gig and where, two years later, the saucy revue *Oh! Calcutta!* provoked stiffly worded letters to *The Telegraph.*) To play a Mozart symphony in that same space would perhaps require a rethink. Actually I'm not so sure. Venues (the buildings themselves) are essentially neutral spaces and the only thing

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preventing, for argument's sake, a performance of the Hammerklavier Sonata at Ronnie Scott's is the imaginative purview of those running Ronnie's as an 'institution'. The Roundhouse's Reverb Festival, which started in 2010, positions contemporary 'classical' music within the context of what else goes on in the building; which implies that, whatever the history etched into their walls, venues live and die through the continuing vision of those in charge.

I missed the first night of Reverb - Richard Strauss's Metamorphosen and Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West Side Story performed by Nicholas Collon's Aurora Orchestra with accompanying film - but Imogen Heap's The Seashell and the Clergyman and a concert by the London Contemporary Orchestra featuring music by Xenakis and Claude Vivier alongside Gabriel Prokofiev and Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood was a reminder that a new brand of contemporary music

Here was a reminder that a new brand of contemporary music now looms large'

now looms large: ambitious concert works commissioned from 'thinking' DJ/pop/folk/rock musicians that look over the heads of classical music organisations for new audiences.

I enjoyed Greenwood's Doghouse very much. He knows instinctively that orchestral composition requires the sort of structural thinking you're not going to find inside the world-from-your-window fourminute design of the classic pop song.

True enough, nearly every note of Greenwood's lavish stringwriting felt filched from Vaughan Williams or from his latest collaborator, one-time Polish 'modernist' Krzysztof Penderecki, but Greenwood is happy to let the sounds be. Nothing's pushed; the music unfolds with a very likeable illusion of spontaneity. In

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The insider's guide

Gramophone selects May's unmissable musical events

Poole, Lighthouse The BSO and conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier present 'A Fantastic Night' featuring Rimsky-Korsakov's May Night Overture, Berlioz's Symphonie fantastique, and Saint-Saëns's Third Violin Concerto with soloist Alina Ibragimova. The concert also takes place on May 3 in Basingstoke. bsolive.com

Truro, Cathedral The Sixteen and Harry Christophers perform sacred choral works by Josquin, Brumel and Lassus as part of their 12th Choral Pilgrimage, visiting 26 churches and cathedrals around the UK. thesixteen.com

New York, Avery Fisher Hall Alan Gilbert conducts the NYPO in the world premiere of Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No 2 with soloist Yefim Bronfman on May 3, 4 and 5. The programme also includes Dvořák's Carnival Overture and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 4. nyphil.org

Manchester, Bridgewater Hall Sir Mark Elder conducts the

Hallé Choir and Orchestra in Elgar's The Apostles, with soloists Rebecca Evans, Alice Coote, Paul Groves, Jacques Imbrailo, David Kempster and Brindley Sherratt. halle.co.uk

Munich, National Theatre The Bavarian State Orchestra conducted by Karl-Heinz Steffens perform Kodály's Háry János Suite, Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, and Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No 1 with soloist Julian Steckel on May 7 and 8. bayerische.staatsoper.de

Amsterdam, Concertgebouw Mariss Jansons conducts the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in an all-Strauss concert - Also sprach Zarathustra, Metamorphosen and Der Rosenkavalier suite - on May 9 and 10. concertgebouworkest.nl

London, St Giles' Cripplegate

John Eliot Gardiner conducts the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists in consecutive concerts on the same evening, exploring Bach's Ascension Day cantatas. Both performances are recorded by Soli Deo Gloria to



Northern (London) lights: the Aurora orchestra with Nicholas Collon

stark contrast, Prokofiev's gobby, power-minimalism-with-a-bit-of-Stravinsky-chucked-in Bass Drum Concerto sounded like an petulant, inarticulate teenager whinging about how his parents (classical music) are repressing him – before sulking back home to pocket his weekly allowance (ie another lucrative classical commission). If Prokofiev, founder of the Nonclassical label, has so many 'issues' with classical music culture, he could stop taking up space and go do something else. You can't change things with posturing – only with ideas. Singersongwriter Imogen Heap's score for the 1928 surrealist silent film *The Seashell and the Clergyman* was sensitively judged within the context of the film itself, her vocals adding a super-real commentary to the surreal visuals. Would I want to hear the music without the film? Doubtful. But I listened to her album 'Ellipse' again the next day and thought it exquisite.

complete its live series of Bach's sacred cantatas. **cadoganhall.com**

Seattle, Benaroya Hall
Chamber group Music of
Remembrance present the premiere
of Another Sunrise by composer
Jake Heggie and librettist Gene
Scheer in commemoration of
Holocaust Remembrance Day. The
work is based on the true story
of poet, satirist and Holocaust
survivor Krystyna Zywulska and
features soprano Caitlin Lynch.
musicofremembrance.org

18 Los Angeles, Walt Disney Concert Hall

The LA Philharmonic conducted by Gustavo Dudamel present the first instalment in their three-year Mozart/da Ponte opera project: *Don Giovanni*, directed by Christopher Alden. The production, taking place on four nights throughout the month, stars baritone Mariusz Kwiecien in the title role. **Iaphil.com**

31 Worcester, Cathedral The Royal Jubilee Elgar Festival runs from May 31 to June 2 with performances from the English Symphony Orchestra, the Elgar Chorale, Worcestershire Choir and Worcester Festival Choral Society. eso.co.uk

EVENT OF THE MONTH

24 Glasgow, Concert Halls

Glasgow Music stages the second of its 75th-birthday tributes to Philip Glass. On May 24 the BBC Scottish SO under Nicholas Collon perform the UK premiere of his Sixth Symphony. On May 25 Glass appears with the Kronos Quartet to perform his score for the 1931 horror film *Dracula*. Finally, on May 26, the composer performs a duo recital of new and established works with violinist Tim Fain.

glasgowconcerthalls.com



Philip Glass





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Packed with detail, the superb clarity of the New World recording of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* will stretch any system's abilities to the limit

Is white the new black in audio? Well, almost...

Taking their cue from Apple, hi-fi designers are rediscovering lighter finishes, says James Vesey













here seems to be something of a revival of white as a colour for audio equipment of late. Of course, it's nothing new: those able to cast their minds back to Braun radiograms will know that, in the early 1960s, designer Dieter Rams captured the spirit of modernism with models such as the iconic SK5, with its white finish and wood endpieces. Rams is often cited as an influence on Apple's Sir Jonathan Ive, responsible for the likes of the iPod, iPad and MacBook, so it's perhaps appropriate that the new trend for white in audio is inspired by Apple's products.

Launching a gloss white finish, exclusive to the UK, Heed Audio – the successor to British company Ion – attributes the move to the Mac range. Richard Hay, designer of the original Ion Obelisk amp and now a consultant to Heed and in charge of UK distribution, says 'Apple's dominance of the portable computer market and the increase in hi-fi retailers and installers specifying Mac Minis has seen white audio products becoming the norm in people's homes.

'Now, with the compact Heed Obelisk range available in a matching white finish, there is no need to sacrifice sound quality for aesthetic reasons.'

It's a trend we've seen growing: last year's Munich High End Show featured several rooms filled with all-white loudspeaker displays. And this month's main review features the tiny, and quite remarkable, Iota

speakers from British company Neat Acoustics, the review pair being supplied in – yes, of course – white.

Then there's Canadian speaker company PSB, launching its Mini speakers as part of its Imagine range. True, the £450/pr speakers aren't quite as compact as the Neats but they're still pretty small at just 23.5cm tall, use a novel clay/ceramic loaded polypropylene woofer and a tweeter with a 'neodymium turbo magnet', and are available in white.

Similarly, French company Focal has a 'gloss diamond white' finish available on its new Bird systems, which combine a base unit, the PowerBird – containing an active subwoofer with an 80W amplifier and 2x35W stereo amplification – and a choice of three designs of satellite speaker: Little Bird, Bird and SuperBird. The PowerBird unit has both digital and analogue audio inputs and can connect to an iPod, iPhone or iPad. Systems start at £699 for the Little Bird 2.1.

Not everyone subscribes to 'white as the new black'. Just launched by Naim is the NDS reference streamer, with new in-house digital technology and suspended circuit boards for vibration-proofing, and carrying a £6250 price-tag. As if one box wasn't enough, you'll need at least one more: the NDS requires the use of an external power supply. You can start with the XP5 XS or you can go all the way up to two of the company's 555 PS power supplies, for just over £17,000. Mind

you, just a little more will buy you another piece of striking black hi-fi – and the solution to a problem Andrew Everard poses in this month's Audio Essay: just how do you play music encoded at 384kHz/24-bit? New in the UK is the Da Vinci digital-to-analogue converter from California-based Light Harmonic, the first product from the company, in business for just over a year.

Described as 'The world's first true bit-perfect 384K asynchronous USB 2.0 DAC', the Da Vinci has a two-piece chassis with the power supplies located in the bottom half, uses in-house circuitry throughout – and is yours for £18,000.

Keeping up with this digital audio thing could start to get really expensive... **G**

- 1 The cause of all this whiiteness? The light finish is apparently the iPhone preference
- Focal's Bird systems offer an active PowerBird and a choice of satellite speakers – in white
- Heed Audio has produced an Apple-influenced gloss white finish, only for the UK market
- Striking, expensive but definitely black: the Light Harmonic Da Vinci DAC is £18,000
- On-trend: the compact **PSB Mini speakers** stand just 23.5cm tall and sell for £450 a pair

GRAMOPHONE MAY 2012 133

REVIEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Neat lota Miniature loudspeakers deliver a big, powerful presentation

Tight on space but won't compromise on sound? Look no further, says Andrew Everard

eat Acoustics may have originally taken its name in part from its location in the North East of England but 'neat' has also proved relevant to several generations of compact speakers from the company, each able to punch well above its weight. From the original Neat Petite and its various successors to the current Motive range, the company's team has combined its talents in speaker design, recording and musicianship to wring out of very small boxes much more sound than one would expect.

However, with its latest model, the Neat Iota, the company has excelled itself. Selling for £650/pr, this is a truly tiny speaker, designed to be used in spaces where even conventional compact speakers are a bit on the big size, and to work equally well on a desktop, on bookshelves or mounted on its dedicated stand or a wall-mount.

The Iota has an unusual layout: the enclosure is wider than it's tall, making it look rather like a conventional speaker laid on its side, with the 50mm planar ribbon tweeter aligned vertically and mounted beside the reflex-loaded 10cm polypropylene cone mid/bass unit. The speakers come in 'handed' mirror-image pairs and can be used with the tweeters 'inside' or 'outside' the mid/bass drivers just by swapping left for right.

Neat says that the ribbon tweeter was chosen as its 'strengths of superb dynamic contrast and accurate tonal colour are well matched to those of the main drive unit' and that the two drivers are linked with a simple, three-element crossover using low-loss air core inductors and high-grade polypropylene capacitors. As is usual with Neat products, the crossovers are designed the best way – as the result of extensive listening, designing by



ear rather than measurement. The 'numbers are all' brigade may sniff at that but the results speak for themselves: Neat has a long pedigree of very musical loudspeakers.

Although the Iotas are much smaller, in a way they remind me of some of the first 'proper' hi-fi speakers I owned: a pair of Mordaunt-Short Festivals, with their shallow cabinets designed to be used either on stands or 'on their sides' on shelves. In student accommodation best described as compact – and that's being charitable – my pair got used in 'landscape' rather than 'portrait' format and slotted neatly into a shelving unit.

The new Iota would be dwarfed by those 1970s Mordaunt-Shorts: the speaker's cabinet stands just 13cm tall, is 20cm wide and 16.5cm deep. Yes, they're that tiny – the internal volume of the enclosure is just 2.6 litres – and they're also very much designed for modern needs. The suggested amplifier

NEAT IOTA

TWO-WAY STANDMOUNT/ DESKTOP LOUDSPEAKERS

Price £650/pr

Drive units 50mm planar ribbon tweeter, 10cm polypropylene cone mid/bass unit

Enclosure Reflex-ported, rear port opening

Sensitivity 84dB/W/m

Impedance 6 ohms
Recommended amplifier power 25-100W

Other features Grille-less design, single-wire speaker terminals, mountings for wall-brackets **Dimensions** (HxWxD) 13x20x16.5cm

Finishes Satin black or white; flame Red, zinc vellow and ultramarine blue available as options

Accessories available Stands (£120/pr)

www.neat.co.uk

power here is 25-100W, while 84dB/W/m sensitivity and 6 ohm nominal impedance means they won't present any problems even when used with fairly modest amplification.

Neat says the new speaker is 'especially suited to the current crop of all-in-one streaming systems, from which a very high level of sound quality may be attained, but space is usually at a premium': I reckon that, while the company is just about bang on the money with that target, this little speaker is going to prove itself suitable for a far wider range of applications.

PERFORMANCE

The Iotas supplied for review were in satin white – the speakers are also available in satin black as standard, with flame red, zinc yellow and ultramarine blue as options – and they came complete with a pair of the company's optional stands, at £120/pr a slimline model



SUGGESTED PARTNERS

The lotas have been designed to be easy-going but thrive with fine partners



MARANTZ CD6004/ PM6004

As a budget system able to drive and control the lotas. you'd be hard pressed to better the Marantz pairing, a steal at around £250 each

NAIM SUPERUNITI

The combination of a £3250 all-in-one streaming solution and £650 speakers is almost comical but the Neats thrive on the end of the Naim system



DESIGN NOTES

MD, Neat Acoustics

Bob Surgeoner

Early exposure to Elgar, the Celtic harp, and why

designed to complement the miniature speakers. Even though I suspect most users will place these little speakers on a desk or shelves, it's good to see that the stands are nicely finished to match the high quality of the speakers and are clearly no afterthought. They're slim single-column affairs with three substantial floor-spikes on each, took about 10 minutes to assemble and even came with a them with the tweeters both 'in' and 'out' and, while the former gave a superb tightness of image focus, using the speakers with the bass units innermost opened up more space in the sound while still retaining almost all of that depth to the sound.

outrageously accomplished speakers: playing

excellent imaging and giving a better sense of The Neat Iotas are, to put it simply,

cathedrals beat hi-fi Neat Acoustics is unusual among

hi-fi companies in being run by musicians, having its own recording studio on site and doing all its development by ear, not by measurement.

MD Bob Surgeoner got his first musical exposure at an early age, when 'Our headmaster would play selections from Bach, Handel, Elgar, etc. on a console record player while we waited for assembly to start. It was a great introduction to the world of classical music and it's a shame that this probably doesn't happen much these days."

Surgeoner plays piano, guitar, double bass, accordion and banjo, playing some classical repertoire but having worked as a musician for 25 years up to 1995 mainly

in jazz, folk and blues. He's always wished he'd learnt the harp, so he's now making 'slow but steady progress' learning a Celtic harp he's bought.

'A choir heard in a cathedral makes you realise how far high fidelity has yet to go'

He says that choosing a favourite recording is an impossible task but press him and he'll vote for Haydn's Cello Concerto in C major, played by Du Pré with Barenboim and the ECO. But his most memorable live experience was Durham Cathedral Choir singing Vaughan Williams's Mass in G minor in the cathedral: 'Experiencing this music in those surroundings makes you realise how far high fidelity sound reproduction has yet to go.'

The Neat lotas are, to put it simply, outrageously accomplished speakers, even with large-scale works

little pack of Blu-tack to attach the speakers to the top-plates.

Alternatively, Neat suggests the speakers should be used on isolating cones if placed on shelves or table-tops, and has also fitted the speakers with two-point horizontal 60mmspaced M6 mounting points, to which a wall-bracket could be attached. It suggests the B-Tech BT33 as one suitable choice: a pair of those will set you back a very sensible £15-£20 and you needn't worry too much about the ability of your wall to hold the speakers as they only weigh 3kg apiece. And yes, my wife has already asked me why I am staring at our kitchen walls with an 'up to something' look on my face, as she put it...

The Iotas were tried on the stands, on our study desk either side of the computer, and even spent some time on the end of a NaimUniti all-in-one system, as well as with my usual Naim NDX/XP5 XS/Supernait/ HiCap. What rapidly became clear was their ability to deliver a quite remarkable sound both for their size and their price: they are well suited for use with amplification of modest power and just keep getting better as the partnering equipment is improved. I tried large-scale works they have powerful, tightly controlled bass - especially when used reasonably close to a rear wall to give some low-end reinforcement - and what they lack in absulute extension they more than make up for with speed and dynamics.

Meanwhile the integration between that hard-working bass unit and the remarkable tweeter is seamless, the little ribbon giving a wonderfully lucid and fluid view of instrumental and vocal character and textures. It also manages to soar all the way up, so allowing the space and air of a recording to sing through and create a lovely openness and free-breathing impression of recordings. There's nothing shut-in or restrained, lightweight or insubstantial about the way the Neat Iota speakers play music - in fact, for a good week or two I used them as my main speakers for day-to-day radio, TV sound and streaming, and I have to say I didn't find them wanting in any respect whatsoever.

So do I have any doubt whether you should audition these speakers if space is tight, or any hesitation in suggesting you should just have a listen for the sake of interest to hear what they can do? No, not one iota. 6







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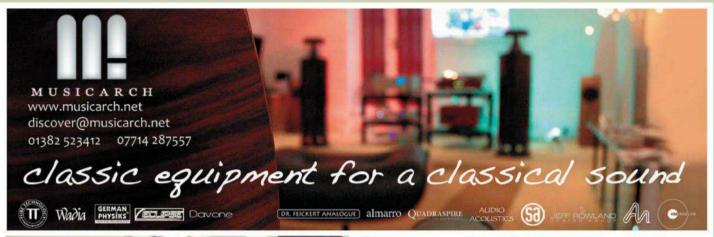
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REVIEW NETWORK MUSIC PLAYER

Denon DNP-720AF

Market forces have made this Denon affordable - but it has limitations, says Tony Williams

usic-streaming is a fast-moving market, with new models appearing and existing hardware repositioned. The Marantz NA7004, launched at around £720, has settled just south of £400, while the same fate has befallen the Denon DNP-720AE: launched last autumn at £430, you'd now have to work pretty hard to spend any more than £250 on it - and, while writing this review, I spotted it for £219! On paper, at least, it packs a lot for the money.

It has Wi-Fi as well as an Ethernet port, both a digital USB input for iPods or iPhones and wireless Apple AirPlay connectivity, and will stream content from home networks, internet radio and services such as Last.fm and Napster. It also packs an FM RDS/AM radio tuner, can play music from connected USB memory devices and acts as a client for Windows 7's 'Play to' functionality, allowing you to playlist music on your computer and then send the whole list for playback to the Denon. There's even 'Wake on LAN' for this application: if the DNP-720AE is in standby, it'll 'wake up' and start playing.

As well as a remote control handset, the Denon has a further trick up its sleeve: it can be controlled over a network by an iPhone or iPod Touch running the company's free Denon Remote App. This puts both control and display in the palm of your hand, while those who like to use more conventional controls will find three direct-access buttons on the remote handset, programmable to favourite internet radio stations.

On the inside, the DNP-720AE has typical Denon circuit design: it's simple and direct, with specially selected components in sound-critical locations. The digital-to-



DENON DNP-720AE

NETWORK MUSIC PLAYER

Price F250 (see text)

Network connections Wi-Fi, wired Ethernet Formats played WMA / MP3 / WAV / AAC / FLAC / s (Transcode) / FLAC 96/24

Inputs USB, Apple AirPlay, FM/AM antennae Audio outputs Stereo analogue on RCA phonos Accessories supplied Wi-Fi antenna, remote handset (can also be controlled by Denon app) Dimensions (WxHxD) 43.4 x 7.4 x 28.2cm

denon.co.uk

analogue conversion uses a 24-bit/192kHz chipset, and the player supports MP3, AAC, FLAC (up to 96kHz/24-bit) and uncompressed WAV files.

PERFORMANCE

The Denon is simple to set up and works reliably (all other factors being equal) on either wireless or wired networking. Denon makes no specific recommendations about which type of connection to use but I settled on a wired connection to the router, using the wireless purely for iPhone/iPod Touch control and Airplay functions.

The Denon Remote App makes it easy to access music, if slightly time-consuming due to page-by-page rather than scrolling lists. And the sound, while slightly anonymous by the standards of the very best streaming hardware, is always smooth and inoffensive, with reasonable low-end weight and a treble that's smooth, if not always the most informative when it comes to ambience.

The DNP-720AE is definitely a step up in sonic terms from streaming using a budget Blu-ray player with such capability; and, while it won't trouble top-end machines or even

those one step up the price spectrum (the stablemate Marantz NA7004, for example, has more substance and presence), if you're after a very affordable radio/internet/network tuner it has much to commend it.

However, there is one yawning gap in the Denon's performance: it doesn't play music gaplessly. That's fine with music clearly divided into sections but not great with opera and choral sets, for example, where one track flows into the next.

How much that will put you off is really a matter of personal taste: the Denon is highly impressive for not very much money but I fear that gapless thing may rule it out for many classical listeners. 6



HOW TO TEST...

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ESSAY

'There's no right format for music just the one best suited to your needs'

Some recent moves on the downloading front show signs that more music is set to become available in whatever format you want, says **Andrew Everard**

here's a lot of debate around how one should store music for playback using a network player, streaming client, network radio, streamer, internet music access point – you see, we can't even agree what to call the things, so the chances of finding any kind of accord on something as complex as the choice of file format is minimal!

Some will tell you that 320kbps (or less) MP3 is more than adequate and that it's impossible to hear an improvement using more data-hungry formats, while others view either CD format WAV or AIFF, or lossless FLAC or ALAC as the minima, and would much rather have their music downloaded, stored and played at resolutions comfortably beyond that available on CD. After all, they say, 16-bit/44.1kHz was out of date when CD was launched, let alone 30 years later.

Yet others will look at some of the highresolution music now becoming available and smell a rat - how can we be sure that the shiny 96kHz/24-bit download for which we've just paid an arm and a leg isn't just a simple upsample of the CD-quality original? The answer to that one is actually relatively simple: you just run the suspect music file through a piece of software such as Audyssey and look for a 'brick wall' drop-off in the frequency spectrum just above 20kHz - but I'd argue that we really shouldn't have to resort to such investigation. Instead, those channels offering 'hi-res' music should play with a straight bat; if they don't, and we all get suspicious of anything claiming to be high-resolution, then those same distributors are in very great danger of shooting themselves in the foot.

Some recent releases and moves in the high-resolution music arena have thrown some of these points into sharp focus: the website of Linn Records, the former *Gramophone*Label of the Year, is now starting to offer hi-res downloads drawn from the catalogues of Universal Music labels Decca Classics and Deutsche Grammophon, while there's another demo-quality release from Norwegian label 2L, allowing the comparison of the sound quality – and storage requirements – of various formats.

However, while Linn is taking baby-steps with its Universal downloads – at the time of writing, there was just a handful of titles available – those there are are very good indeed.



Recordings such as 2L's latest Trondheim Soloists disc are available in a choice of file formats

I downloaded a few for a listen as 96kHz/24-bit files, including Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (Sir Colin Davis/Royal Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra) and Mahler's Eighth Symphony (Solti/Chicago SO), and through my system there's definitely a power, dynamic openness and detail not available from a standard CD. I'm looking forward to this particular catalogue growing.

Also small – but capable of sensational sound quality – is the catalogue from 2L, which has just released its latest recording by the Trondheim Soloists. Well, actually the first part of its latest recording: 'Souvenir' is to be released in two stages, with the second due about the time you read this.

It was recorded in surround using the DXD format, giving about four times the resolution of standard SACD format DSD, and is available at CD quality, as MP3 files, as high-resolution stereo and multichannel at 96kHz/24-bit, and as 192kHz/24-bit stereo. Oh, and as an LP, Direct Metal Mastered from the 352.8kHz/24-bit DXD files, and a Blu-ray disc combining almost all the formats.

Thanks to 2L's Morten Lindberg I was able to download all the versions of the set and compare sound quality and file sizes: I am absolutely sold on the quality gains available all the way up to the 192kHz/24-bit stereo –

'I'll stick to the 192kHz/24-bit version for listening at home, while the 320kbps MP3 would be fine for the iPod or for listening in the car'

I don't, as yet, have anything able to play the FLACs taken from the DXD version!

But, of their kind, even the MP3 files are very good-sounding, so it's really a matter of trading storage space for better sound. That could be a consideration: taking one track, the opening of Tchaikovsky's Serenade for strings, the MP3 version (at 320kb/s) occupies 22.7MB for just under nine and a half minutes of music, the CD-quality FLAC 51MB, the uncompressed WAV 99.3MB, the 96/24 version 187.4MB and the 192/24 version 365.6MB. Oh, and for hilarity's sake, the DXD 'master' is 782.7MB.

There's really no right format for music: it's just a case of choosing the one best suited to your needs. Me, I'll stick to the 192kHz/24-bit for listening at home, while the 320kbps MP3 would be perfectly adequate for an iPod through the white earbuds or in the car.

But one thing's for sure: I really must find a 384kHz/24-bit digital-to-analogue converter, just to satisfy my curiosity! **6**

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Comfort in the cold

What an evocative and iconic image showing Chris the dog on Captain Scott's Antarctic Expedition peering into the horn of a gramophone (March, pages 10-11). It was January 1911, the gramophone was a Victor Monarch and Chris was emulating HMV's Nipper, the latter making his first record label appearance less than two years earlier.

Readers may be interested in sampling something of the flavour of musical life on Scott's final journey to the South Pole, as documented in his diary. The gramophone was a staple of life while they were laid up during midwinter in their Base Camp Hut at Cape Evans. With no daylight for six months of the year, the days were spent testing equipment and drawing plans for the forthcoming southern journey. After the evening meal the members read, wrote or played games and 'the gramophone is usually started by some kindly disposed person'. Midwinter Day (June 22) was 'observed with all the festivity customary at Xmas at home', including a huge cake, speeches and toasts, after which 'the gramophone gave forth its most lively airs'.

Most revealing of all of the musical sensibilities of the party was a Christmas Day celebration (yes, they celebrated Christmas twice!) while their ship, the Terra Nova, was struggling through the pack ice towards the frozen continent. I quote Captain Scott again:

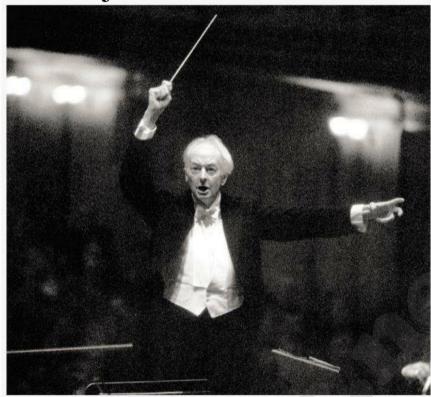
'For five hours the company has been sitting round the table singing lustily; we haven't much talent...it is rather a surprising circumstance that such an unmusical party should be so keen on singing...the effect when a number of men break into the chorus is generally inspiriting.'

Plus ça change, then: music did for Scott's expedition then what it has done historically and what it will continue to do in the future - invigorate and fortify the human spirit in times of challenge and adversity.

Barry Borman Edgware, Middx, UK

Sacred vessels

In his review of Charles M Joseph's Stravinsky's Ballets (March, page 84), John Warrack suggests that the only source for Stravinsky's remark, 'I am the vessel through Letter of the Month



Günter Wand: intellectual rigour, textual clarity and emotional depth

A magic Wand experience

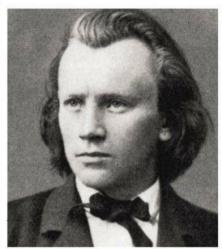
Thank you for Michael McManus's feature on Günter Wand (Icons, March, page 18), which brought back memories. I count myself blessed to have been at one of the two concerts in September 1998 during which Wand's performance of Bruckner's Symphony No 9 on RCA mentioned by McManus was recorded. That was the first time I had heard the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra live and it was also to be the one and only time I would hear Günter Wand live. Now, nearly 14 years later, I still regard that concert as the most memorable and indelible musical moment in my concert-going experience. The sense of inevitability which Wand brought

to the performance of the Bruckner was overwhelming. I remember it was impossible to listen to or do anything else after that concert. And I remember simply sitting up in my hotel room all night, stupefied for hours by the fusion of intellectual rigour, textual clarity and emotional depth which Wand brought to the Bruckner, the sound of the performance still vivid in my head till the early hours of the morning. Even now, that remains the only time I have had such an experience from a concert.

And yes, I do still regret that I never had the opportunity to listen to Wand again. Phan Ming Yen Singapore

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Brahms: the Albumblatt is old news...

which *Le sacre* passed', was the composer's published conversations with Robert Craft. The quote is attributed to Stravinsky in *Expositions and Developments* (Faber: 1962), page 148.

However, Stravinsky is literally 'on the record' as having said this. The recording from which the Craft conversation was transcribed was made available as a commentary entitled 'Apropos of *Le sacre*', provided with various issues of Stravinsky's recording of *The Rite* with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra in 1960. It was included as a single-sided bonus LP in Columbia's 'Stravinsky Conducts 1960' and included as an introductory track to *The Rite* in the two-LP set (with *Petrushka*) released in this country and reviewed in *Gramophone* (April 1961, page 45).

Colin Green Southport, Merseyside, UK

Paragons of Americana

Philip Clark reviews a new recording of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* (April, page 76) and describes it as 'the most important document about the history of Americancomposed music to have appeared in a long, long time'. He may very well be right. *Gramophone* readers may largely be unaware of the splendid recordings that its conductor, Rick Benjamin, and his Paragon Ragtime Orchestra have been producing over some 25 years, featuring both orchestral ragtime and also early Broadway show-music. They demonstrate an impeccable sense of period style.

Andrew Lamb West Byfleet, Surrey, UK

142 GRAMOPHONE MAY 2012

A missed Elgar opportunity

I enjoyed Richard Osborne's survey of Brahms's Third Symphony recordings (April, page 88). The VPO/Krauss recording that he praises at the very start is also available on Preiser Records PR90258, coupled with Beethoven's Second, the *Scherzo* of Bruckner's Fourth and some *Humparian Dances*.

Elgar owned this (originally HMV) set. He loved Brahms's Third, conducted it several times with the LSO and gave a lecture on it in 1905, while he was Peyton Professor of Music at Birmingham. We can now see it as a missed opportunity that Fred Gaisberg did not persuade HMV to record Elgar in it (and in Mozart's G minor symphony – his other non-Elgar speciality). It might even have been the work's first recording! *Phillip Brookes Eastleigh, Hants, UK*

Behind on Brahms

I regret that, in your account of Christopher Hogwood having discovered and András Schiff having premiered a new Brahms *Albumblatt* on the BBC (News Analysis, March, page 13), you have picked up on old and discredited news.

This untitled piece is no discovery of Hogwood's. In fact, the *Albumblatt*, as he christened it, had been well known among musicologists since spring 2011. The Research Centre (Forschungsstelle) of the New Brahms Edition (*Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*) at the University of Kiel, which was significantly involved in the identification of the piece, has established the sequence of events as follows:

In mid-March 2011 Dr Ralf Wehner (of the Leipzig Mendelssohn Edition) kindly pointed out to us that the New York auction house Doyle was offering online an autograph album containing an unidentified piece by Brahms. Since the relevant page was imaged online, it was not difficult for me to identify the piece as an early piano version of the later second-movement trio section of the Horn Trio, Op 40. I immediately sent this information to the auction house, who updated their online description, acknowledging my identification, as they did also in their printed catalogue.

It is also incorrect that the *Albumblatt* was 'premiered on BBC Radio 3 by András Schiff on January 21[, 2012]'. In fact, Schiff was the fourth to play the work publicly. The first was the American pianist Craig Sheppard, who played it as an encore after his recital on April 28, 2011, in Seattle (Meany Theater, University of Washington). My colleague Dr Jakob Hauschildt played it in October, and this constituted the first European performance. The first worldwide broadcast was on January 19, 2012, on the

US Radio Station WPRB Princeton, played by the young American pianist Andrew Sun. Two days later András Schiff gave the first European broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Dr Michael Struck Forschungsstelle der Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe, Musikwissenschaftliches Institut der Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Germany

Delius and Beecham on disc

My attention has been drawn to Jeremy Dibble's long and well-researched 'Man of the world' article (February, page 22). May I take this opportunity to remind readers of the many gramophone recordings that Frederick Delius's friend and champion Sir Thomas Beecham made for this medium?

As early as 1927 we discover that Sir Thomas was presenting Delius on disc for our consumption and wonder. Beecham's 78rpm recordings filled the catalogues with his own London Philharmonic Orchestra and he waited little time to show off his newly founded RPO in 1946 with weeks of recording Delius. The long-playing era was no exception, and once again his Delius recordings showed the others how it should be performed.

So, I feel that that has settled the score and I am sure that readers will look beyond those recommended recordings listed by Mr Dibble and seek out those made by Sir Thomas – his 'taming of a wild woman', which was how Beecham described the challenge of Delius's music having first encountered it.

Allan Maund Sandbach, Cheshire, UK



Thomas Beecham: taming a wild woman

gramophone.co.uk

Sixth sense

The controversy over the proper sequence of the two middle movements in Mahler's Sixth Symphony has its strong advocates on both sides and appears to continue unabated. However, I think that both strictly musical and emotional considerations decidedly tip the scales in favour of the Scherzo-Andante sequence.

First, as documented by Christoph Eschenbach (Gramophone, March 2010, page 41), the key relationship from the end of the Andante to the finale is very carefully crafted. Second, the obvious emotional 'logic' of the Andante (the most beautiful but achingly heartbreaking and tear-inducing music Mahler ever composed) coming before the eerie and foreboding beginning of the finale and its shatteringly tragic apotheosis is unassailable. Third, I think it should go without saying that Mahler the composer knew exactly what he was doing when he crafted the Andante-finale sequence (as well as the structural and sequential parallel of the first two movements of the Sixth Symphony to the first two movements of the Fifth Symphony), even if Mahler the conductor second-guessed himself out of his own foreboding over what he had wrought.

Finally, as observed by Edward Seckerson (Gramophone, July 2011, page 59), even Mahler reverted to the original sequence after he had acted on his self-doubt at the symphony's premiere. All told, it seems to me that the case clearly is in favour of the Scherzo-Andante sequence for the middle movements of Mahler's Sixth Symphony. Robert Scuka

Kensington, MD, USA

Editorial Notes

Oliver Schnyder is a Swiss, not a German pianist, as a review averred (March, page 61).

NEXT MONTH

As part of our guitar focus, we interview the chart-topping Miloš and celebrate those who continue to commission new works for this often-neglected instrument

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OBITUARIES

A much-loved soprano and a trumpet pioneer



Elizabeth Connell: sang for Nelson Mandela

ELIZABETH CONNELL

Soprano Born October 22, 1946 Died February 18, 2012

The dramatic soprano Elizabeth Connell has died in London, aged 65. Born in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, she took part in student performances of Dido and Aeneas while reading for a music degree at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and then, while visiting Australia when she was 19, sang with Joan Sutherland in Les contes d'Hoffmann.

After a spell as a schoolteacher, she came to Britain in 1970 on a scholarship and studied at the London Opera Centre with Otakar Kraus. But, facing union objections as a white South African in London during the apartheid era, she struggled to find work. She eventually made her professional debut at Wexford in 1972, launching a career which was to last almost 40 years, initially as a mezzo-soprano.

Her breakthrough came with the attention she received for her performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony under Pierre Boulez at the First Night of the 1975 Proms. She made her Covent Garden debut the following summer as Viclinda (I Lombardi) and sang regularly for English National Opera between 1975 and 1980, in which year she also made her Bayreuth debut. She made the switch from mezzo to soprano in 1983.

She sang in Mahler's Eighth Symphony for the opening of the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and, in 2004, made a rare return to South Africa to mark the 10th anniversary of the end of apartheid in an emotional performance of Fidelio in front of Nelson Mandela at Robben Island.

Her final performance was at a concert in Hastings in November, when her farewell encore was Ernest Charles's 'When I have

sung my songs'. Her recordings include Rossini's William Tell under Riccardo Chailly, Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Klaus Tennstedt, which won Gramophone's Orchestral Award in 1987, Mendelssohn's Second Symphony with Abbado, Schreker's Die Gezeichneten with Lothar Zagrosek, Donizetti's Poliuto and Verdi's I due Foscari under Lamberto Gardelli, Schoenberg's Gurrelieder with Eliahu Inbal, Isolde under Eve Queler, Britten's Owen Wingrave conducted by Richard Hickox and Schubert Lieder with Graham Johnson as part of Hyperion's Complete Schubert Edition.

Antony Craig

MAURICE ANDRÉ

Trumbeter Born May 21, 1933 Died February 25, 2012

Maurice André has died in Bayonne: he was 78. Born into a mining family, he showed early musical promise and joined a military band. He studied initially with Léon Barthélémy. This enabled him to attend the Conservatoire in Paris, where he studied with Raymond Sabarich (whom he later succeeded as professor of trumpet in 1964). He won prizes in the Geneva International Music Competition (1955) and the ARD International Music Competition in Munich (1963). In 1953 he joined the Lamoureux Orchestra; later he joined the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra.

His exploration of music of the Baroque did much to resuscitate a forgotten repertoire and his performances, particularly on the piccolo trumpet, revived many hidden corners of the brass repertoire. He recorded extensively, largely for French EMI and Erato, one of his most successful albums being of four Baroque and Classical trumpet concertos with the Berlin Philharmonic and Karajan in 1974. The disc sold over one million copies.

André gave his last concert in Béziers in October 2008. Among his many distinctions were the Légion d'Honneur and membership of London's Royal Academy of Music. James Jolly



Maurice André: explored the Baroque

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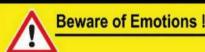
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Tom Chambers

The actor and Strictly Come Dancing winner on playing the piano and the trumpet, classical music memories – and drumming with his feet

I've always been the odd one out in my family. No one else is remotely artistically inclined, although they all like to have a good sing. I'm the runt of the family, the youngest of five, so I never got a say over what music we would listen to. It was always my brother's music – Huey Lewis and the News, Fleetwood Mac – or my sister's – Abba – that we would play over and over again.

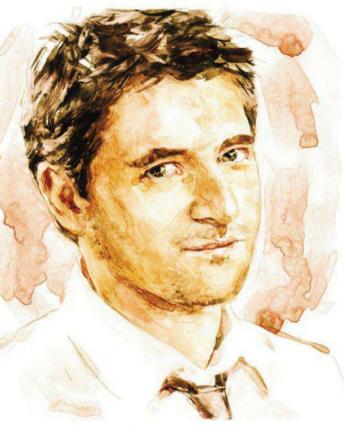
Growing up, I sang in a choir and played the piano. I learnt to play Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata – everyone's favourite – and I'd often try to make up my own tunes as well. I still do (although my wife Claire thinks they're terrible). From the age of 10, I took up the trumpet. I was in the concert band and the school orchestra. When I left school, the trumpet got put away in a cupboard and it only came out once a year for Remembrance Day, when I always played *The Last Post.* It got to the point when I had to play it a fifth lower than it was written. Your lip needs to be really strong to play the trumpet, and that's never going to happen if your instrument stays locked away for months at a time.

I have genuinely always loved classical music. My choices are probably too commercial and obvious, but I like Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals*, Pachelbel's Canon...When I was learning to drive, I'd have to make long trips down the M1 from Derbyshire, where I lived (in the middle of nowhere), to London for the National Youth Music Theatre. I would play Debussy's 'Clair de lune' on repeat in the car, because it would remind me of the girl I vowed I would marry one day (it only took nine years for us to get together!).

So classical music triggers many memories for me. Widor's Toccata, for example – I heard it played on the organ in a church in LA when I was living out there, trying to find work. I was feeling so lost, and suddenly this piece connected me to home.

But for me, ultimately, it was always about the feet. You could say that tap dancing is drumming with your feet, and from the age of 13, that's all I wanted to do. When I was trying to get a new agent and promote myself a few years ago, I recreated the famous Fred Astaire drum routine from the film *A Damsel in Distress*. It's so hard – I spent nine months working on it. It's hard to explain how I learn a tap routine. It's a feeling – it's feeling the shape of something with the rhythm, rather than thinking of counts or beats. Your body has to feel it, like swimming in the ocean and feeling the current, or writing calligraphy. Then it's about repetition until it becomes muscle memory. Tap routines are so fast that you don't have time to think.

I feel immense pressure following in Fred Astaire's footsteps with *Top Hat*, the live show. I don't pretend I'm anywhere near his ability but I'm constantly working on it – it's an endless craft. We opened in August last year and did a UK tour, which was really well received. Since then, it's been developed on the road. The Irving Berlin estate





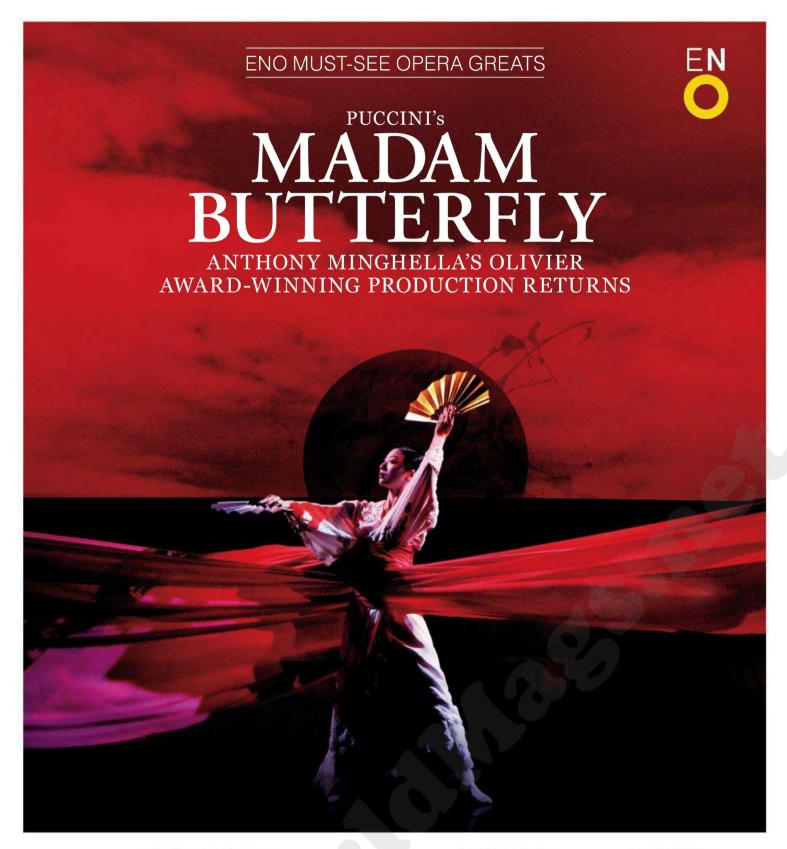
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Thibaudet's 'Clair de lune', the highlight of the *Suite* bergamasque, has been described by *Gramophone* as 'exceptionally silvery and transparent' - but to me, it simply reminds me of the woman I love.

has suggested changes here and there, and we're very lucky that with its support we can do 'Puttin' on the Ritz' as the opening number.

I think our son William, who was born last May, is a little too young to see me on the stage – although we did play him the video of the *Strictly* show dance, which he seemed to like. But he does seem to respond to classical music. We bought a 'Classical Music for Babies' CD when he was born, and whenever we play Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* to him in the car, he quietens down. I guess appreciation of classical music must run in the family! **G**Top Hat opens at the Aldwych Theatre, London, on April 19; for more information, visit tophatonstage.com



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